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ABSTRACT

Recent graduates of conservation courses throughout the United Kingdom were surveyed to determine the impact of existing training courses and internship courses on their early careers as conservators. (Conservators are archivists and curators who work primarily in museums.) Of the 404 individuals contacted, 137 (35.2%) returned usable responses. The respondents' average age was 32, and 78.4% of respondents were female. The respondents believed that both the general and technical skills provided by available courses match well with those deemed important in conservation employment. The main deficiencies in existing courses appeared to be related to private sector practice and self-employment. Because of the increasing trend toward self-employment among conservators and current low levels of recruitment in the museums and galleries sector, recent graduates were having great difficulty gaining vital initial experience without internship programs. Despite the many problems in becoming established in a conservation career, most conservation graduates manifested a striking commitment to conservation work. Four out of five were working as conservators, even if their posts took a long time to obtain, and most of those not currently working in the conservation sector hoped and expected to return to it. (The report contains 20 references and 50 tables/figures. The survey questionnaire is appended.) (MN)

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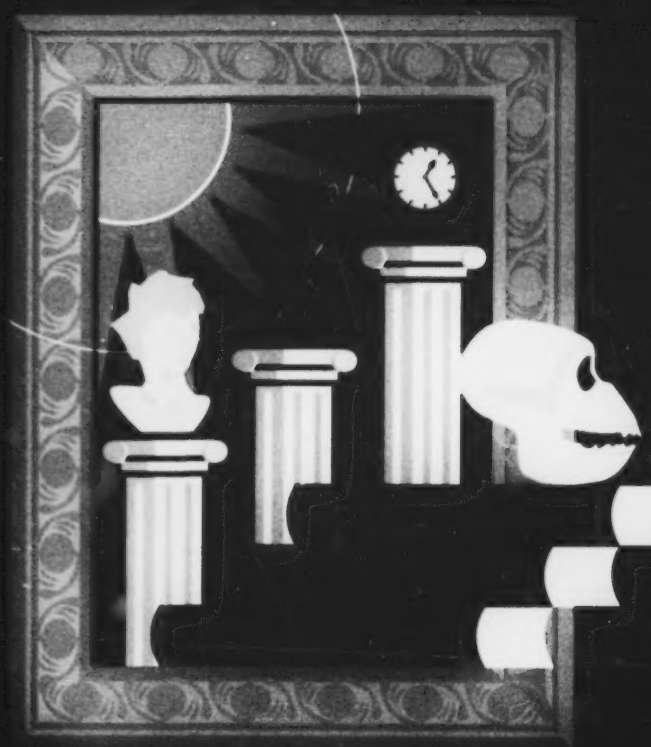
the Institute for Employment Studies

Nurturing Conservators: the Early Career Paths of Conservation Graduates

N Jagger
J Aston



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N Jagger
J Aston

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Contents

Executive Summary ix

1. Introduction 1

1.1 Background 1
1.2 Aims and objectives 1
1.3 The importance of conservation and conservators 2
1.4 Structure of the report 3

2. The Postal Survey 4

2.1 The sample 4
2.2 The response rates 5
2.3 The pattern of response 5

3. The Courses and Work experience 8

3.1 Motivations for study 8
3.2 First destinations of conservation graduates 11
3.3 Satisfaction with courses 11
3.4 General skills development 16
3.5 Practical skills development 21
3.6 Work experience 26

4. The Careers 31

4.1 Conservation work 31
4.2 Non-conservation work 32
4.3 Types of work and contracts 35
4.4 Careers advice 38
4.5 Career histories 38
4.6 Case studies 40
4.7 Career satisfaction 41
4.8 The expectations of the future 42

5. Internships and Their Value 46

5.1 The benefits of an internship 46
5.2 The nature of internships 48
5.3 Good practice and internships 51

6. Conclusions and Recommendations 53

6.1 Conclusions 53
6.2 Recommendations for conservation courses 56
6.3 Recommendations on the role of internships 57
6.4 Recommendations on internships and professional status 59

Bibliography 60

The Questionnaire 63

Executive Summary

This report covers the early careers of conservation graduates and focuses on the role of internships in their professional development. The report is based on a study undertaken by the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) for the Museums & Galleries Commission (MGC). The study concentrated on conservators working within the remit of the MGC, which is working on movable heritage.

The projects aims and objectives were to:

- provide an overview of the training of conservators
- examine how the existing training courses contribute to the professional development of conservators
- examine how subsequent practical training (internships) complements the theoretical training from the courses.

IES undertook a postal survey of course leaders of Conservation courses. This course leaders survey was designed to identify the numbers of graduates from the courses and their initial destinations. This indicated that despite an overall increase in numbers, especially at the first degree level, the proportion entering conservation-related employment has held steady. In many ways it appears that first degree conservation studies are replacing HNC and HND courses, in response to a need for a greater theoretical content. The course leaders were also asked to provide names and current addresses, of their recent graduates. This was to act as the basis of a postal survey of recent graduates.

The technical aspects of the postal survey are covered in Chapter 2. Overall, the survey of recent graduates obtained a 35.2 per cent response rate. This response rate is typical of surveys based on addresses collected in this manner. In practice, the response rate was probably higher. Among those for whom we had names and addresses, we achieved a response rate of 47.8 per cent, while where the mailing went out via course leaders a response rate of only 21.5 per cent was achieved. The net outcome was responses from 137 recent conservation graduates.

Both the general and technical skills provided by the courses match well with those that are important in conservation employment. The survey respondents indicated that the main problem areas, in terms of training deficiencies in the courses,

appear to be related to private sector practice and self-employment. In part this appears to be a result of the changing pattern of employment among conservators which is increasingly on this basis. Another impact of the changes in employment patterns is that with the current low levels of recruitment in the museums and galleries sector it is extremely difficult for recent graduates to get the vital initial experience without an internship.

Despite the many problems in becoming established in a conservation career there is a striking commitment to conservation work amongst the conservation graduates. Four out of five are working as conservators, even if their posts took a long time to obtain. At the same time the majority of those who are not currently working in the conservation sector, hope and expect to return.

Internships and work experience outside the course (usually after) are associated with an increased likelihood of conservation employment. Nine out of ten (89.6 per cent) of those who had had an internship were currently in conservation employment. This compares with 82.9 per cent of those who had work experience outside their course. This would include those who were practising conservators before taking a postgraduate course. On the other hand, only 55.6 per cent of those who had no internship or work experience were in conservation employment.

The follow-up telephone interviews and the comments on the questionnaire confirmed that internships were very useful assistance in becoming professionally established. Interns gain the imprimatur of the institution, collection and supervisor where they held the internship, and that of the awarding body. It is possible to become professionally established without an internship. However, in the current climate of low recruitment, internships clearly represent a mechanism by which the best of each cohort can gain the necessary practical experience for professional recognition.

The report makes a series of recommendations (Chapter 6) for conservation courses, on the role of internships and the on the relationship between internships and professionalism.

Table 1: Percentage working in conservation sector by whether they had internships and/or work experience

	% in conservation employment	No.
Internship	89.6	48
Work experience not as part of course	82.9	35
Work experience as part of course	70.6	109
No work experience or internship	55.6	9
All	*71.2*	*132*

Note: numbers sum to more than total as multiple responses were allowed

Source: IES/MGC Survey of Conservation Graduates' Early Career Paths

In brief, these recommendations are:

- that courses should increasingly reflect the importance of self-employment as an outcome for conservation graduates
- where possible, that courses should include an assessed work experience component
- that the MGC explore the possibility of providing independent careers advice for conservation students
- that efforts should be made to ensure that conservation courses attract the higher levels of HEFCE funding associated with laboratory and technology based subjects
- to continue the MGC conservation internships and possibly expand the range of museum- and gallery- related disciplines covered by them
- to expect potential interns to have reached a minimum level of competencies, possibly based on Cultural Heritage National Training Organisation (CHNTO) approval of courses
- to develop a code of good practice for internships, including the belief that the term should be reserved for paid periods of post-qualifying employment of a least one year
- that the possibility of further private sector internships in United Kingdom Institute for Conservation (UKIC) accredited establishments should be explored.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The Institute for Employment Studies (IES) was commissioned by the Museums and Galleries Commission (MGC) to undertake a study of the early career paths of conservation graduates. As part of this study the MGC wanted a particular focus on the role of internships and their potential development. A range of approaches was used to examine the career paths of conservation graduates. These included:

- approaches to conservation course leaders to obtain first destinations data, and names and addresses of former students
- analysis of the first destinations data and the available literature
- a postal survey of recent conservation graduates with 125 responses
- follow-up telephone interviews with 20 recent graduates
- face-to-face and telephone interviews with a series of key informants.

1.2 Aims and objectives

The primary aim, as specified in the Research Brief was '... to provide ... an overview of current training provision and employment patterns of recently qualified conservators'. The project was also to explore the experience of recent student conservators and consider means by which any perceived shortfall in practical training could be remedied. Two strands of research were identified:

- the first examining how the existing training courses contribute to the development of a professional practitioner
- the second examining how subsequent practical training complements the theoretical training received through the established training courses.

In practice both issues were largely addressed through the postal questionnaire of recent graduates, the second strand being examined largely in terms of internships.

The remit of the Museums & Galleries Commission covers the 'movable heritage'. Therefore the study did not examine those who conserve buildings or landscapes, and only covered those conserving archaeological finds, paintings, manuscripts and papers, furniture, clocks and other movable objects. Equally, the study concentrated on conservators and did not examine graduates of more general museums studies courses.

1.3 The importance of conservation and conservators

The size of the conservation labour market is very hard to establish, mainly due to problems with reconciling conservation with existing data definitions. However, we do know a number of partial facts:

- The Department for Culture, Media and Sport estimates the 'Art and Antiques Market' to be worth £2,200 million, with £1,300 million worth of exports and 39,700 people in employment. Further, they also estimate that this sector spent £51 million in 1996 on conservation and restoration (DCMS, 1998).
- Conservators, almost by definition, preserve and conserve the nation's heritage, which is virtually impossible to value.
- *Museum Focus* identifies 1,606 conservators, of whom 1,015 were general conservators, employed by 262 UK museums, archives and other heritage bodies (MGC, 1999a).
- The Labour Force Survey (LFS) for Spring of 1999 indicates that approximately 49,800 people are employed by the Library and Archives sector, and 40,700 by the Museums sector.
- In terms of occupations, the Standard Occupational Classification (OPCS, 1990) has no category for conservators and they are spread over many categories which also include non-conservators. The main category which would include some conservators (SOC 271: archivists and curators) has fewer than 10,000 people and thus no data is reportable from the LFS.
- There are more than 2,500 museums in the UK, with 80 million visitors in 1997, of which 17 million were from overseas (MGC, 1999b).
- The Museums and Galleries Commission's Conservation Register covers about 850 studios which meet the criteria of at least seven years of practice.
- Our survey of conservation courses suggests that about 150 UK residents a year graduate from university level courses which are explicitly related to the conservation of the nation's movable heritage.

These necessarily partial figures suggest that a relatively few conservators form an essential part of a large, and nationally very valuable, sector. As such, the training and initial careers of these conservators becomes an area of strategic importance. This report aims to examine their early careers and the role of internships.

1.4 Structure of the report

The report consists of five further chapters:

- **Chapter 2**: deals with the technical aspects of **The Postal Survey** of recent conservation graduates such as the sample and the response rate.
- **Chapter 3**: reports information **on The Courses and Work experience** gained from the survey of conservation graduates, and the first destinations data.
- **Chapter 4**: examines the early **Careers** of conservation graduates based on the survey.
- **Chapter 5**: looks at **Internships and their Value** to the careers of conservation graduates.
- **Chapter 6**: details the **Conclusions and the Future** of Conservation Training.

2. The Postal Survey

This chapter covers the technical aspects of the postal survey of recent conservation graduates. The aspects covered include:

- the sample
- the response rates, and
- the pattern of response.

2.1 The sample

The database of names and addresses of recent conservation graduates was built from a number of sources. These included:

- names and addresses of recent graduates supplied by course leaders
- names and addresses of those who had applied to the MGC for internships
- names and addresses volunteered as a result of an item in MGC's newsletter for the Conservation Register.

In all, 209 names and addresses were obtained this way.

Additionally, where course leaders were unable to release names and addresses (usually because of data protection rules), another approach was used. We supplied the course leaders with stamped envelopes containing the questionnaire, a covering letter and a reply paid return envelope. In all, we provided 195 stamped envelopes to five course leaders. There are a number of problems with this alternative. It introduces lags into the process, we can only undertake a blanket reminder, and we cannot be sure how many of these questionnaires are mailed out. We made the optimistic assumption that the course leaders had current names and addresses for all those who had graduated over the last five years. This was unlikely to be the case, but it does mean that the response rates based on these optimistic figures are undoubtedly an underestimate.

There was obviously scope for duplication of names and addresses, given the multiplicity of sources. Whilst every effort was made to avoid duplication this was, to an extent, inevitable.

We asked those that received duplicate questionnaires to inform us so that we could better calculate the response rates.

The first wave of questionnaires were sent out on 25 May, with reminders sent on 29 June to those who had not responded. Where the course leaders were addressing the envelopes, we had to undertake a blanket reminder to all those on the course leaders' lists. The survey was closed on 19 July, by which time we had received 139 usable responses.

A copy of the questionnaire is contained at the back of this report.

2.2 The response rates

Overall, we achieved a response rate of 35.2 per cent. However, in practice, the response rate was probably higher than this as we believe that the course leaders did not have current addresses for all those who had graduated from their courses over the last five years. Where we had the names and addresses we obtained a response rate of 47.8 per cent. Those that were addressed by course leaders generated a response rate of 21.5 per cent, although as already mentioned, this figure is artificially low.

We received four Post Office returns where the respondent was not at the address given, and no forwarding address was available. We were also informed of 11 duplicates, where the mailing, via the courses, duplicated names and addresses obtained by other means. We believe that both of these may be underestimates, which implies that the actual achieved response rate was higher. Either way the response rate achieved is typical of surveys where the addresses are obtained in this manner or mailed out by courses.

2.3 The pattern of response

The average age of respondents was 32 years old, although the male respondents were on average older at 38, compared with the female respondents at 31. Nearly four out of five respondents

Table 2.1: Response rates and pattern of response by mode of mailing

	IES mailing	Courses mailing	All
Respondents	97	40	137
Non-respondents	111	146	257
Post-office returns	1	3	4
Reported duplicates	5	6	11
Mailing	209	195	404
Base	203	186	389
Response Rate	47.8	21.5	35.2

Source: IES/MGC Survey of Conservation Graduates' Early Career Paths

Table 2.2: Respondents, by institution of study

	No.	%
De Montfort	31	22.3
Courtaulds Institute	17	12.2
West Dean	17	12.2
Northumbria	17	12.2
London Guildhall	12	8.6
Cardiff	10	7.2
London Art School	10	7.2
Camberwell	9	6.5
UCL	3	2.2
Others (6 institutions)	13	9.4
Unknown	3	2.2
Total	*139*	*100.0*

Source: IES/MGC Survey of Conservation Graduates' Early Career Paths

(78.4 per cent) were female, with the male respondents largely concentrated in the more craft based conservation areas such as clocks and watches and furniture.

In terms of the institutions where people had studied, De Montfort, with its undergraduate course, provided the largest group of respondents. De Montfort was followed by the Courtaulds Institute and West Dean, both with 12.2 per cent. Table 2.2 shows the percentage of respondents from each of the main courses.

Some of the respondents had finished their conservation courses in 1991 and three had finished this year. However, the bulk (68.8

Table 2.3: Course completions, by year and gender

	Male		Female		All	
Year	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
1991	2	6.9	2	1.8	4	2.9
1992	2	6.9	2	1.8	4	2.9
1993	–	–	3	2.8	3	2.2
1994	2	6.9	8	7.3	10	7.2
1995	9	31.0	18	16.5	27	19.6
1996	5	17.2	26	23.9	31	22.5
1997	6	20.7	31	28.4	37	26.8
1998	3	10.3	16	14.7	19	13.8
1999	–	–	3	2.8	3	2.2
Total	*29*	*100.0*	*109*	*100.0*	*138*	*100.0*

Source: IES/MGC Survey of Conservation Graduates' Early Career Paths

Table 2.4: Level of conservation qualifications obtained, by gender

	Male		Female		Both	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
HND	–	–	5	4.7	5	3.7
First degree	12	41.4	54	50.5	66	48.5
PG Dip	10	34.5	27	25.2	37	27.2
Higher degree	7	24.1	21	19.6	28	20.6
Total	*29*	*100.0*	*107*	*100.0*	*136*	*100.0*

Source: IES/MGC Survey of Conservation Graduates' Early Career Paths

per cent) finished between 1995 and 1997. Table 2.3 provides more details.

On average, male respondents completed their course longer ago than the female respondents; an average of 3.6 years compared with 2.9 years for the female respondents.

Male respondents were more likely to have obtained either a postgraduate diploma or a higher degree than the women, who were more likely to have obtained a first degree. Table 2.4 gives the detailed breakdown of level of qualification obtained by gender.

The different pattern of qualifications obtained largely explains the gender differences in the qualifications held by respondents before their conservation course (Table 2.5). Women were more likely to have had 'A' levels, while the men were more likely to have had a first degree. The males were more likely to have had an HND rather than 'A' levels, reflecting the greater craft based nature of the courses pursued by the men.

Table 2.5: Level of previous qualifications held, by gender

	Male		Female		Both	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
'A' levels	3	10.3	38	35.2	41	29.9
HND	3	10.3	6	5.6	9	6.6
First degree	16	55.2	49	45.4	65	47.4
PG Diploma	1	3.4	3	2.8	4	2.9
Higher degree	1	3.4	1	0.9	2	1.5
Other	5	17.2	11	10.2	16	11.7
Total	*29*	*100.0*	*108*	*100.0*	*137*	*100.0*

Source: IES/MGC Survey of Conservation Graduates' Early Career Paths

3. The Courses and Work experience

This chapter examines:

- motivations for studying conservation subjects
- first destinations of conservation graduates
- satisfaction with courses
- general skills development
- practical skills development, and
- work experience.

The main messages to emerge from the analysis were as follows:

- Interest in the subject matter is the primary motivation to undertake a conservation course at first and sub-degree or postgraduate level.
- Respondents were fairly satisfied with most aspects of the courses they had taken. However, they were less satisfied with the careers advice that they had received from their tutors and institutions.
- There was a surprisingly good match between the generic and practical skills that had been developed during the courses, and their importance in respondents' subsequent careers. The main areas which were felt to be important, but had not been well developed, were time and project management, as well as appropriate packaging as part of preventive conservation.
- Most respondents had had some form of work experience and/or an internship. These appeared to be very helpful in pursuing a career in conservation.

3.1 Motivations for study

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of six possible reasons, or motivations, for having chosen their last conservation course. On a scale of 1 to 5, they were asked to rate the importance of each item (where 1 represented 'not at all important' and 5 represented 'extremely important'). The results are shown in Tables 3.1 and 3.2, as well as Figure 3.1. The reasons rated as being most important on average were:

Table 3.1: 'How important were the following in your choice of your most recent conservation course?' (per cent)

	Not at all important	Not very important	Neither important nor unimportant	Important	Extremely important	Base: N
Interest in the subject matter	–	0.7	–	19.6	79.7	138
Opportunity for change in career direction	12.1	4.3	14.7	36.2	32.8	116
Advancement of chosen career	10.1	4.6	17.4	32.1	35.8	109
Course a formal entry requirement for career	13.2	2.6	7.9	40.4	36.0	114
To build practical skills	3.6	3.6	6.6	36.5	49.6	137
To complement existing qualifications	9.7	8.8	17.7	39.8	23.9	113

Source: IES/MGC Survey of Conservation Graduates' Early Career Paths

- 'interest in the subject matter', with a mean score of 4.8 and 79.7 per cent rating this as 'extremely important', as well as
- 'importance of building practical skills' with a mean score of 4.3 and 49.6 per cent rating this as 'extremely important'.

'Advancement of chosen career' and 'opportunity for a career change' both achieved the same mean score of 3.8. Of these, 'advancement of chosen career' achieved the highest proportions of respondents rating this reason as extremely important (35.8 per cent), compared with the 32.8 per cent similarly rating 'opportunity for a career change'. 'To complement existing qualifications' achieved the lowest mean score, at 3.6. Although 39.8 per cent felt it was important, only 23.9 per cent rated this as extremely important. From these results, it appears that conservation graduates choose particular courses for a variety of reasons, some related to career aspirations and some to previous training. However, almost without exception, they share a very strong common interest in the subject.

3.1.1 Motivations by course level

The average scores by course level (first and sub-degree, and postgraduate) are shown in Table 3.2. The main point to note is that, overall, those who had completed postgraduate courses rated all the items as being more important than did those who had last completed a first and sub-degree course. These differences are likely to have occurred as a result of the extra commitment and finance which is needed to undertake and complete a postgraduate course. This extra commitment, to the subject and/or career aspirations in the field, may have been reflected in the importance which postgraduates afforded to the various motivations. Within both groups, the items retained the same relative importance to each other as they had for the sample as a whole.

Table 3.2: Reasons for undertaking the most recent conservation course, by degree level (mean scores)

	First and sub-degree	Postgraduate	All
Interest in the subject matter	4.75	4.81	4.78
Opportunity for change in career direction	3.61	3.93	3.76
Advancement of chosen career	3.64	3.92	3.77
Course a formal entry requirement for career	3.81	3.91	3.86
To build practical skills*	4.09	4.43	4.26
To complement existing qualifications*	3.30	3.84	3.58

Note: * indicates a significant difference at the ten per cent level

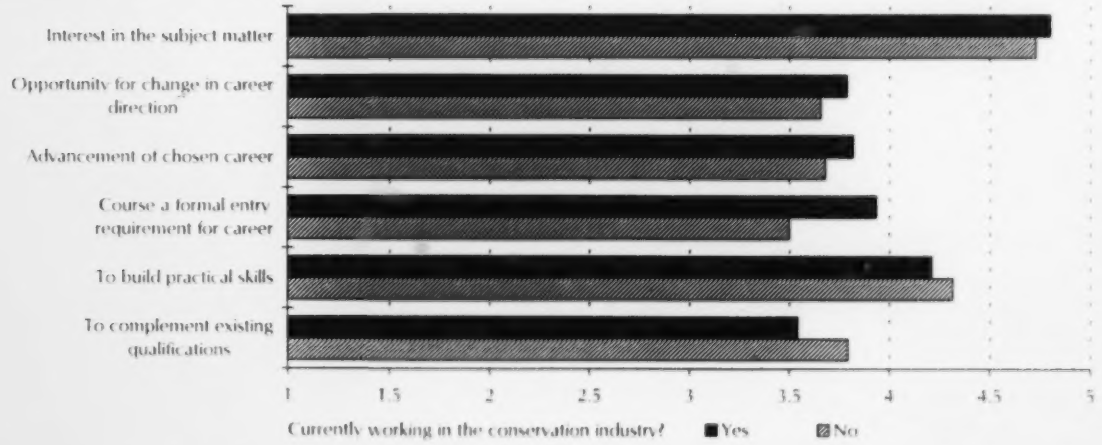
Source: IES/MGC Survey of Conservation Graduates' Early Career Paths

3.1.2 Motivation by subsequent career

A further break was used to examine the data produced by this question, which was whether the respondent was currently working in the conservation/heritage industry. It was felt that this might provide some differences, due to some individuals being more motivated by the subject (and hence more tenacious in seeking out conservation work) than others. It was expected that those currently working in a relevant field might have placed more importance on career-related reasons.

Figure 3.1 shows the results of this breakdown. Those currently working in the conservation industry gave slightly higher scores for most of the items. Although there were exceptions, the one with the largest discrepancy being 'to complement existing qualifications'. However, there were no statistically significant differences.

Figure 3.1: Reasons for undertaking the most recent conservation course, by whether currently working in the conservation industry (mean scores)



Source: IES/MGC Survey of Conservation Graduates' Early Career Paths

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Table 3.3: First destinations of conservation graduates 1993/94 to 1996/97 (per cent)

	1993/94 Graduates	1994/95 Graduates	1995/96 Graduates	1996/97 Graduates	Total 1993/94 to 1996/97
Total Graduates	*112*	*143*	*129*	*156*	*544*
In non-conservation related employment	6.5	7.2	9.3	6.5	7.3
In conservation related employment	76.6	76.8	75.9	72.5	75.6
Further study or training	15.9	10.1	13.9	15.2	13.5
Believed to be unemployed	0.9	5.1	0.9	5.1	3.2
Not available for employment	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.7	0.4
Total known destinations	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*
Those with unknown destinations	5	5	21	18	49

Source: IES/MGC Survey of Conservation Course Leaders

3.2 First destinations of conservation graduates

Details of the first destinations of conservation graduates were collected from course leaders. Courses collect data on the labour market status of graduates as of 31 December of the year in which the students graduate. This is usually about six months after graduation. The leaders of all the conservation courses identified as of interest to the study were approached and from all but one course were able to provide summary data on the destinations of their graduates. Table 3.3 contains the aggregated data for UK domiciled students from UK based conservation courses at all levels.

Part of the reason for obtaining this data was to examine whether the increasing provision, especially at first degree level, had led to a worsening in the job prospects of conservation graduates. Overall, despite the increasing number of UK domiciled graduates (from 112 to 156) the proportions entering conservation related employment has remained pretty constant. Unemployment, although rare, is largely balanced by the numbers going on to further study or training. Caution is needed before examining the data in more detail as many courses, especially at the post-graduate level, are run only every two or three years which makes comparisons difficult. However, it is possible to conclude that the increase in numbers has not led to a decrease in the proportion entering conservation work.

3.3 Satisfaction with courses

In order to gauge retrospective course satisfaction amongst respondents, they were asked to rate 12 statements about their course using a five point scale ranging from 1 representing 'disagree entirely' to 5 representing 'agree entirely'. The results are shown in Table 3.4 and Figures 3.2 and 3.3.

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Table 3.4: Agreement/disagreement with statements about respondents' conservation courses (per cent)

	1 disagree entirely	2	3 neutral	4	5 agree entirely	Base: N
The course was good value for money	5.8	13.9	21.2	31.4	27.7	137
The course content was too theoretical	33.3	26.1	18.8	15.9	5.8	138
The quality of the teaching was high	5.8	14.6	17.5	32.8	29.2	137
The course content was too practical	53.6	31.9	10.9	2.2	1.4	138
The course led to relevant career in conservation	2.9	8.7	15.2	28.3	44.9	138
There were too many people on the course	46.4	15.2	11.6	14.5	12.3	138
The course content matched the prospectus description	3.6	12.3	21.7	31.2	31.2	138
The tutors offered helpful careers advice	32.1	24.8	16.8	14.6	11.7	137
The institution offered helpful careers advice	47.8	26.8	7.2	9.4	8.7	138
The tutors provided useful career contacts	25.4	21.7	13.0	18.8	21.0	138
The prospectus gave a false impression of career possibilities	30.9	24.3	17.6	14.7	12.5	136
The course was too long	56.5	19.6	18.8	2.2	2.9	138
The course was too short	42.0	15.2	21.7	12.3	8.7	139

Source: IES/MGC Survey of Conservation Graduates' Early Career Paths

Nb: depending upon the statement, the most favourable answer might be 'agree entirely', or 'disagree entirely', hence a high mean score does not necessarily indicate a favourable reply — they are context specific.

3.3.1 General trends

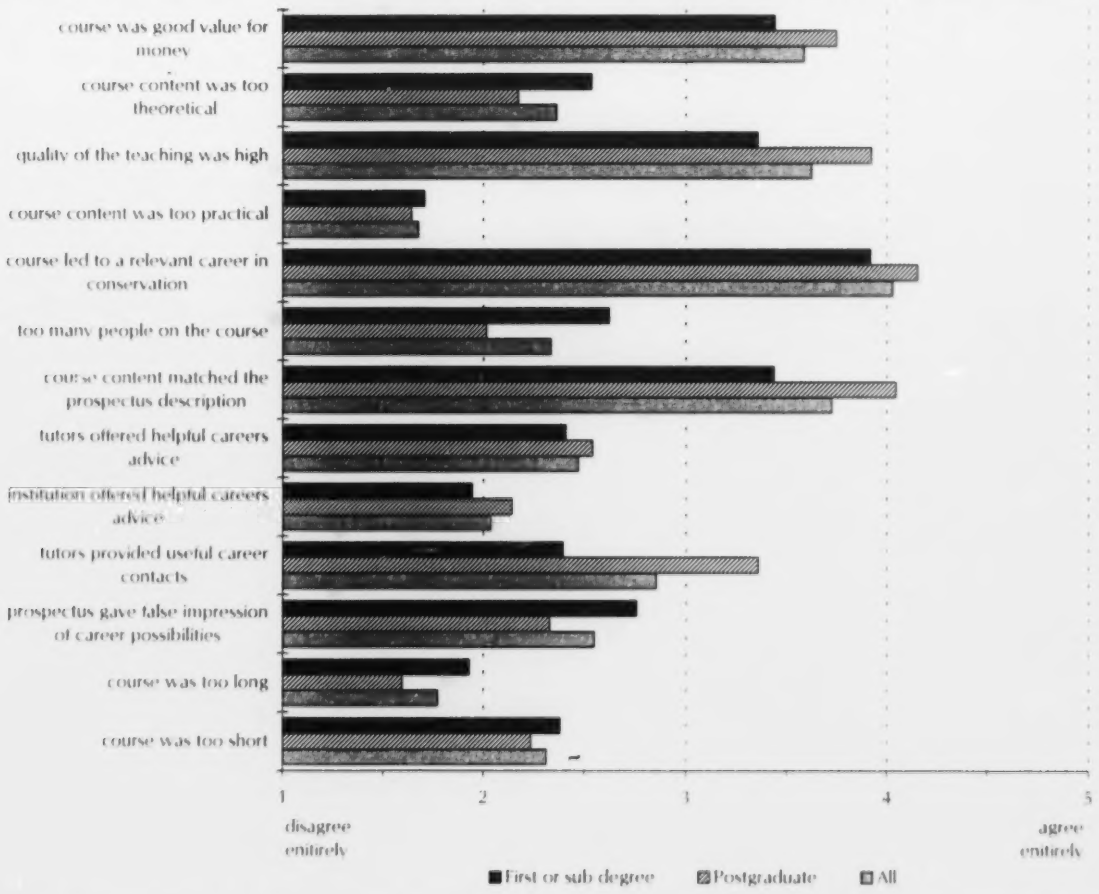
Figure 3.2 shows the scores for the respondents by course level, and for the sample as a whole. The scores for the whole sample indicate that, on average, these respondents:

- agreed *slightly* that their course was good value for money
- disagreed that their course was too theoretical
- agreed *slightly* that the quality of the teaching was high
- disagreed *quite strongly* that their course content was much too practical
- agreed that the course led to a relevant career in conservation
- disagreed *slightly* that there were too many people on their course
- agreed *slightly* that the course content matched the prospectus description
- disagreed *slightly* that their tutors offered helpful careers advice

- disagreed that their institution offered helpful careers advice
- disagreed *slightly* that their tutors provided useful career contacts
- disagreed *slightly* that the prospectus gave a false impression of career prospects
- disagreed *quite strongly* that their course was too long
- disagreed that their course was too short.

The bullet points above put the respondents' average scores into context. They show that as a whole the respondents did not give the most extreme answers (disagree strongly, agree strongly) and so many of the answers were fairly near the neutral point. However, statements about course value for money, course content, teaching quality, course length and career relevance achieved quite favourable responses. The areas which achieved unfavourable replies with regard to course provision were centred around the careers advice they had received. Almost half of the respondents disagreed entirely that the institution offered

Figure 3.2: Agreement/disagreement with statements about respondents' conservation courses (1 = disagree entirely, 5 = agree entirely), by course level (mean scores)



Source: IES/MGC Survey of Conservation Graduates' Early Career Paths

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helpful careers advice, and a further quarter disagreed. Almost one-third disagreed strongly that tutors offered helpful careers advice. To a lesser extent, the response to 'tutors provided useful career contacts', was also unfavourable; 25 per cent disagreed strongly and a further 22 per cent disagreed.

It appears that while respondents were fairly satisfied with many aspects of their courses, they were not satisfied with the careers advice and practical careers guidance they had received from their tutors and institutions.

This dissatisfaction was illustrated by many of the respondents' comments, for example:

> *'University careers advisors tried hard to be helpful but were not clued up on conservation, despite having the course at the university.'*

> *'On my course the principal element lacking was careers guidance, and this was not considered necessary for mature postgraduate students. Any guidance there was stopped at the end of the course. Entry to the conservation profession is extremely competitive and my college could provide sound training, but no more.'*

> *'The snobbery of the lecturers to promote their courses by focusing students on pursuing careers in museums and historic houses is very unhelpful. Students should be given realistic careers advice. No recognition is given to private industry where there are likely to be far more opportunities for employment, and also better pay.'*

However, some respondents held more positive views on the careers advice that had been available to them:

> *'My first employment (self-employed work) was found through contacts of a member of staff. The course then sent me regular job adverts. But I would have liked more guidance on interview skills and completing application forms.'*

> *'The academic and personal support and guidance was, I believe, without fault. If you put the effort in yourself you were assisted in return.'*

3.3.2 Satisfaction by course level

The mean scores broken down by course level are shown in Figure 3.2. On all 12 statements the postgraduates' responses were, at the mean, more favourable than those given by those who had completed a first or sub-degree. Significant differences (at a level of ten per cent probability) between the two groups were found for the following statements:

- there were too many people on the course
- the prospectus gave a false impression of career possibilities
- the course content was too theoretical
- the course was too long.

Even greater significance was reached (one per cent probability level) between first and sub-degree graduates and postgraduates for the following:

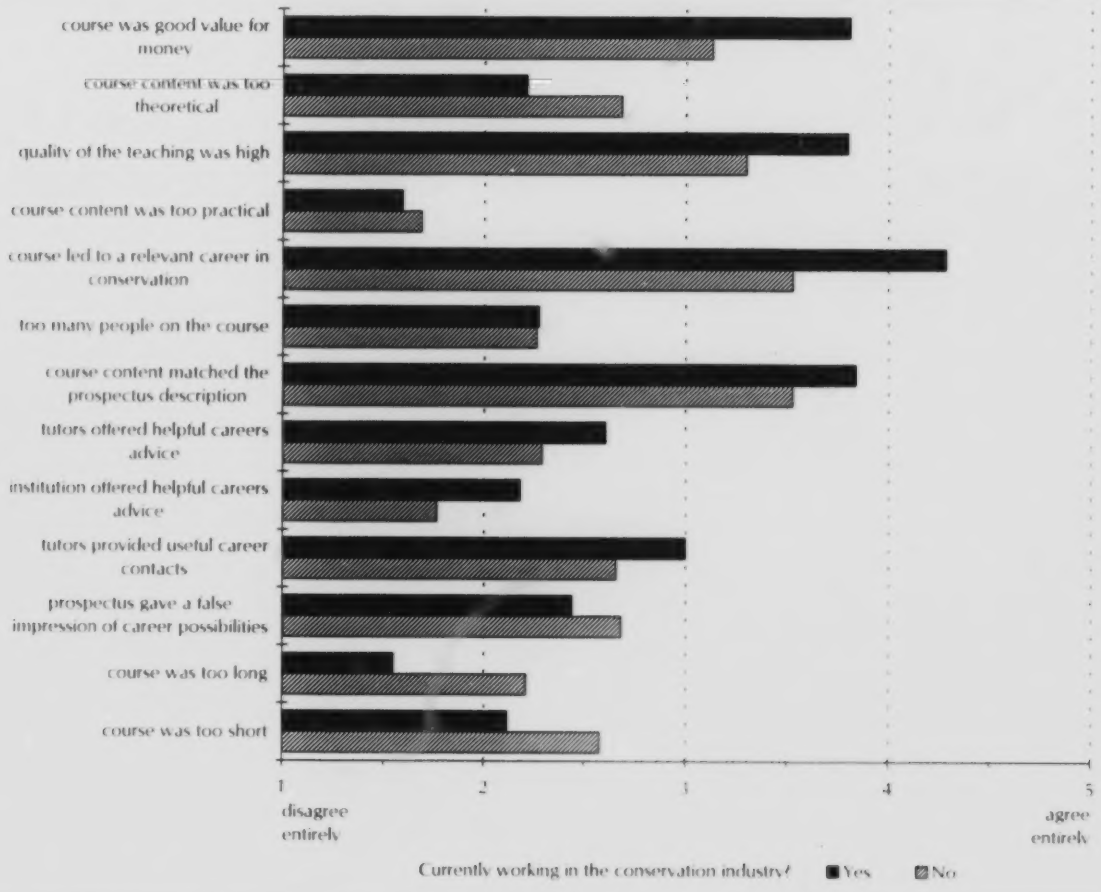
- the course content matched the prospectus description
- the quality of the teaching was high
- tutors provided useful careers contacts.

Hence, first and sub-degree graduates were less satisfied with their courses as a whole than were postgraduates, and were significantly less satisfied with their courses with regard to the bulleted measures above.

3.3.3 Satisfaction by subsequent career

As in section 3.1.2, the data was also broken down by whether the respondent was currently working in the conservation/ heritage industry. The results are shown in Figure 3.3. It was thought likely that those working in conservation may rate their

Figure 3.3: Agreement/disagreement with statements about respondents' conservation courses, by whether currently working in the conservation industry (mean scores)



Source: IES/MGC Survey of Conservation Graduates' Early Career Paths

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courses more favourably than those who were not working in the conservation/heritage field. This could be due to their courses having been genuinely better than those attended by respondents not currently working in conservation, courses which in turn increased the likelihood of their graduates working in the conservation field. Alternatively, those who had failed to break into the field may simply view their courses as worse in the light of their subsequent career.

As expected, those who were currently working in the conservation or heritage industry rated their courses more favourably on every statement except numbers of people on the course, which had the same mean score for both groups. Hence, whilst the mean scores for each group generally followed the patterns in the data for the sample as a whole, those who were currently working in the conservation/heritage field were more satisfied with their last course, on virtually all of the measures. They were significantly more satisfied on the following measures (one per cent probability):

- the course was good value for money
- the course content was relevant to a career in conservation.

Those currently working in conservation were also significantly more satisfied on the following items, although the level of significance reached was lower (ten per cent probability).

- the course content was too theoretical
- the course was too long.

3.4 General skills development

3.4.1 The importance of general skills in career

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of a series of general skills in their career, on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 represented 'very unimportant' to 5 representing 'very important'. The results for the whole sample, and broken down by course level, are shown in Table 3.5, in order of descending overall importance. The highest scores were given to:

- motivation and enthusiasm
- problem solving, and
- time management.

Only one item, numeracy, scored below the neutral level, *ie* scored as unimportant.

Table 3.5: Importance of particular skills in subsequent career, by course level (mean scores)

	First or sub-degree	Postgraduate	All
Motivation and enthusiasm	4.16	4.39	4.27
Problem solving	4.19	4.31	4.25
Time management*	3.87	4.28	4.07
Written communications*	3.90	4.19	4.04
Verbal communications*	3.83	4.17	3.99
Managing own learning and development	3.93	4.06	3.99
Team working	3.77	3.92	3.84
Project management*	3.52	3.89	3.70
Innovation and creativity	3.47	3.76	3.61
Self-presentation	3.46	3.76	3.60
General IT/computer literacy	3.28	3.33	3.30
Marketing/presentation	3.21	3.22	3.22
Leadership	3.16	3.25	3.20
Numeracy	2.72	3.03	2.87

Note: * Indicates significance difference at the ten per cent probability level

Source: IES/MGC Survey of Conservation Graduates' Early Career Paths

Differences by course level

There were small differences between the mean scores given by first and sub-degree graduates and postgraduates, on most of the items. Postgraduates tended to rate the majority of the items as slightly more important than did the first and sub-degree group, although significant differences were only found for time management, project management, verbal communication and written communication (Table 3.5).

Differences by subsequent career

As Table 3.6 shows, there were both substantive and significant differences on many of the general skills, between those who were and were not currently working in the conservation industry. All items except one were rated as more important by those who were currently working in the conservation field than by those who were not. In fact, the following skills were all rated as having been significantly more important by those who were currently working in the conservation industry:

- time management and project management
- verbal and written communication, and self-presentation
- innovation and creativity, and teamwork
- motivation and enthusiasm, and problem solving.

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Table 3.6: Importance of particular skills in subsequent career, by whether currently working in the conservation industry (mean scores)

	Currently working in conservation?	
	Yes	No
Motivation and enthusiasm*	4.38	4.03
Problem solving	4.36	3.97
Time management	4.15	3.89
Managing own learning and development	4.03	3.83
Verbal communications*	4.13	3.76
Written communications*	4.15	3.72
Marketing/presentation	3.15	3.43
Team working**	4.01	3.42
Project management*	3.85	3.36
Self-presentation*	3.75	3.25
Innovation and creativity**	3.78	3.22
General IT/Computer literacy	3.39	3.14
Leadership*	3.33	2.95
Numeracy	2.91	2.83

Note: * indicates significant differences at the ten per cent probability level
** indicates significant differences at the one per cent probability level.

Source: IES/MGC Survey of Conservation Graduates' Early Career Paths

The only exception to the general pattern was that marketing and presentation was rated as significantly more important by those who were not currently working in the conservation industry than by those who were.

3.4.2 Helpfulness of the course in general skill development

In order to assess the impact of the course in the development of the generic skills required in respondents' subsequent careers, they were also asked to rate the same list of skills in terms of how helpful the course had been in developing each. A five point scale was provided, ranging from 1 representing 'no help in developing skill', to 5 representing 'of great help in developing skill'. Results are shown in Figure 3.4. For the whole sample, the courses best helped the following skills to be developed:

- problem solving (3.6)
- written communications (3.5)
- managing own learning and development (3.5)
- verbal communications (3.3)
- team working (3.2)
- motivation and enthusiasm (3.2).

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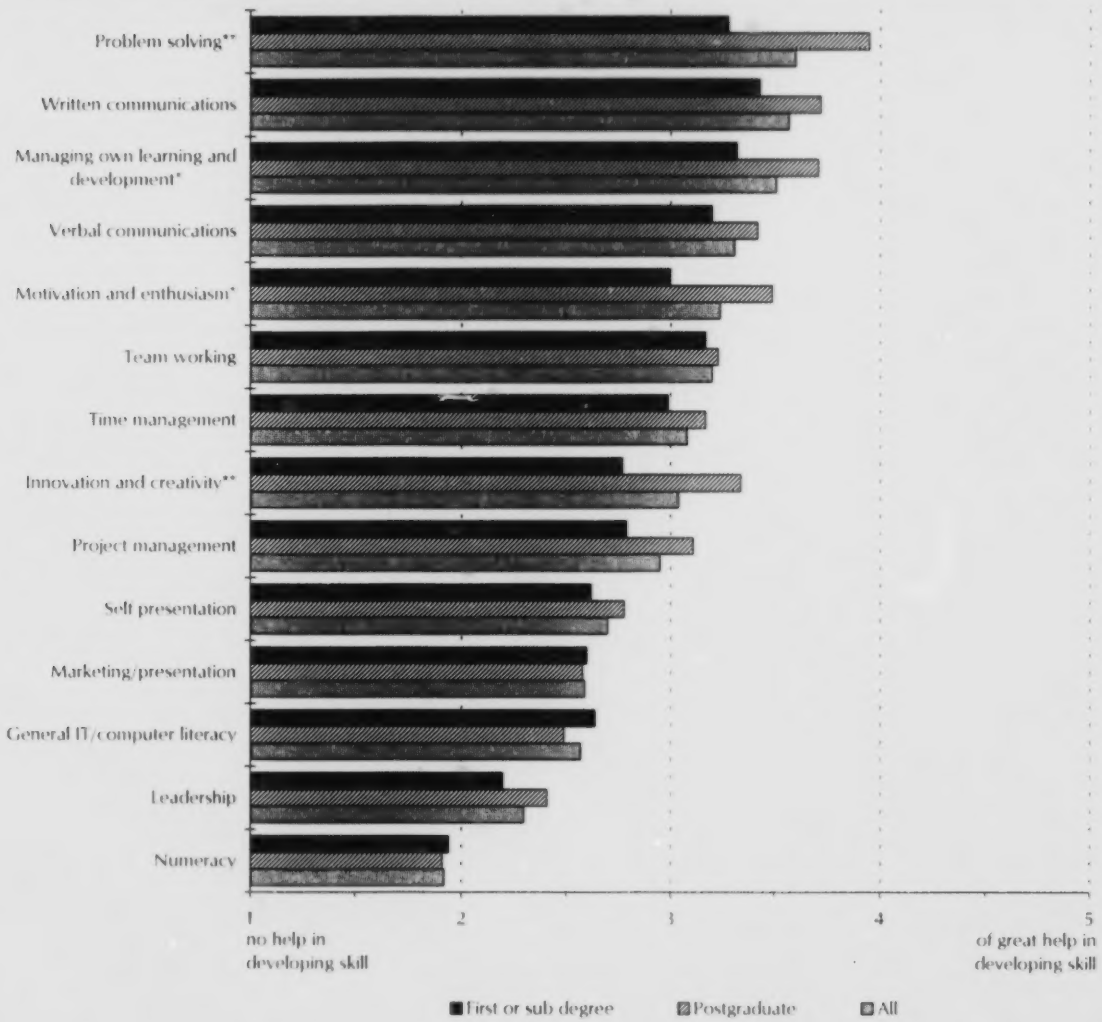
Figure 3.4: Extent to which the conservation course helped to develop particular skills, by course level (mean scores), in order of importance



Note: * indicates significant differences at the ten per cent probability level
** indicates significant differences at the one per cent probability level

Source: IES/MGC Survey of Conservation Graduates' Early Career Paths

The following skills were rated to be least well developed by the courses:

- numeracy (1.9)
- general IT/computer literacy (2.5)
- marketing/presentation (2.6)
- self-presentation (2.7).

Comparing these scores with the scores given for importance of these skills in respondents' careers (subsection 3.3.1) shows that there is a fairly good match between those skills which the course helped to develop and those which had subsequently been important. This is illustrated in Figure 3.4, which shows the

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extent to which the course helped to develop each skill for the whole sample, and by course level. On the graph, the skills have been placed in descending order of importance and there is a clear overall decline in the extent to which skills had been developed as their subsequent importance dropped. There were some exceptions to this, where importance and development did not match so well. The main one was time management, which was placed third overall in importance in respondents' subsequent careers, with a score of 4.2. However, the score for how well the course had helped to develop this skill was 3.1, and it appeared eighth in the list. There was also a mismatch, although to a lesser extent, for project management. These differences suggest that conservation graduates might benefit from the development of more time management and project management during their courses.

The skills which had been least well developed were in fact also the skills which had been least important in respondents' subsequent careers.

Differences by course level

Turning to differences by course level in the scores on the extent to which the course helped to develop the skills, postgraduates tended to give higher mean scores than first and sub-degree graduates (Figure 3.4). These higher scores were significant for developing problem solving skills, innovation and creativity, motivation and enthusiasm, and managing own learning and development. However, postgraduates scored equally to first and sub-degree graduates on self-presentation, and lower on marketing, IT, and numeracy.

Differences by subsequent career

There were differences in mean scores by whether respondents were or were not currently working in the conservation field (Table 3.7). Those who were engaged in conservation work gave higher mean scores than those who were not, for all of the skills, with the exception of numeracy which received the same mean score from both groups. There were significant differences between the groups for five of the skills:

- verbal communication
- managing own learning and development
- written communication
- general IT, and
- innovation and creativity.

Those working in conservation had a much more positive view of the extent to which their courses developed their generic skills.

Table 3.7: Extent to which the conservation course helped to develop particular skills, by whether currently working in the conservation industry (mean scores)

	Currently working in conservation?	
	Yes	No
Time management	3.20	2.84
Project management	3.03	2.86
IT literacy	2.67	2.14
Verbal communications	3.52	2.86
Written communications	3.73	3.22
Marketing/presentation	2.67	2.41
Self-presentation	2.81	2.43
Innovation and creativity	3.23	2.76
Team working	3.32	3.03
Leadership	2.43	2.24
Motivation and enthusiasm	3.33	3.14
Numeracy	1.97	2.00
Managing own learning and development	3.76	2.97
Problem solving	3.77	3.31

Source: IES/MGC Survey of Conservation Graduates' Early Career Paths

3.5 Practical skills development

In addition to scoring generic skills, respondents were asked to rate the importance of a series of practical and technical skills in their career, on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 represented 'very unimportant' to 5 representing 'very important'. They were also asked to rate how well their last conservation course helped them to develop each skill.

3.5.1 The importance of practical skills in careers

The results for the whole sample and broken down by course level, are shown in Table 3.8. Scores for the whole sample indicated that, on average, all of the technical skills listed had been important in respondents' careers, although some had been particularly important. The highest overall scores were given to:

- assessment/examination of single items or small groups of artefacts (70 per cent rated as very important)
- preventive conservation: appropriate handling (59 per cent)
- documentation of artefacts (56 per cent), and
- health and safety in conservation (45 per cent)
- preventative conservation: appropriate packaging (50 per cent).

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Table 3.8: Importance of particular technical skills since having completed the course, by course level (mean scores)

	First or sub-degree	Postgraduate	All
Assessment/examination of artefacts:			
single items or small groups**	4.0	4.7	4.3
collection surveys/plans*	3.1	3.7	3.4
advanced examination techniques	3.0	3.4	3.2
Identification/proposal of conservation options:			
prediction of outcome**	3.6	4.4	3.9
estimation of resources*	3.4	4.1	3.7
development of new options**	3.3	4.1	3.7
Implementation of routine interventive options:			
minor/moderate interventions*	3.6	4.1	3.8
major interventions to stabilise*	3.3	4.0	3.6
major interventions for study/display*	2.9	3.4	3.1
on-site*	2.9	3.8	3.3
for the range of artefacts/materials normally associated with your area*	3.4	4.0	3.7
Application of preventive conservation:			
appropriate handling	4.0	4.2	4.0
appropriate packaging	3.8	3.9	3.8
monitoring environment	3.7	3.9	3.8
maintaining environment	3.5	3.7	3.5
Documentation of artefacts	4.0	4.3	4.0
Health and safety in conservation	4.0	4.1	4.0

Note: * indicates significant differences at the ten per cent probability level
** indicates significant differences at the one per cent probability level

Source: IES/MGC Survey of Conservation Graduates' Early Career Paths

In fact, each of these skills was rated to have been very important by at least 45 per cent of the sample (actual percentages are shown in brackets). In addition, the following skills were rated to have been very important with regard to career by at least 40 per cent (again, actual percentages are shown in brackets):

- implementation of routine minor/moderate interventions (42 per cent)
- preventive conservation: monitoring environment (43 per cent).

Differences by course level

Table 3.8 also shows that postgraduates gave higher scores than those who had most recently completed a first or sub-degree, for

every technical skill listed. This is likely to be a reflection of the slightly larger proportions of postgraduates compared to first and sub-degree graduates who were working in conservation and hence had found the skills particularly pertinent. Differences reached a significance level for ten of the skills; these are marked with asterisks in Table 3.8.

Difference by subsequent career

There were significant differences between the scores given by those who were and were not currently working in the conservation or heritage industry (Table 3.9). Unsurprisingly, scores were far higher for all skills amongst those working in conservation and these differences were all significant. Amongst

Table 3.9: Importance of particular technical skills since having completed the course, by whether currently working in the conservation industry (mean scores)

	Currently working in conservation?	
	Yes	No
Assessment/examination of artefacts:		
single items or small groups**	4.7	3.5
collection surveys/plans**	3.8	2.6
advanced examination techniques*	3.3	2.7
Identification/proposal of conservation options:		
prediction of outcome**	4.2	3.3
estimation of resources**	3.9	3.1
development of new options**	3.9	2.9
Implementation of routine interventive options:		
minor/moderate interventions**	4.1	3.2
major interventions to stabilise**	3.9	2.8
major interventions for study/display**	3.5	2.2
on-site**	3.7	2.1
for the range of artefacts/materials normally associated with your area**	4.0	2.8
Application of preventive conservation:		
appropriate handling**	4.4	3.4
appropriate packaging**	4.2	3.1
monitoring environment**	4.1	2.9
maintaining environment**	3.8	2.8
Documentation of artefacts**	4.5	3.3
Health and safety in conservation**	4.4	3.1

Note: * indicates significant differences at the ten per cent probability level
** indicates significant differences at the one per cent probability level

Source: IES/MGC Survey of Conservation Graduates' Early Career Paths

Table 3.10: Extent to which the conservation course helped to develop particular technical skills, by course level (mean scores)

	First or sub-degree	Postgraduate	All
Assessment/examination of artefacts:			
single items or small groups*	4.1	4.5	4.3
collection surveys/plans	3.1	3.2	3.2
advanced examination techniques**	3.2	4.1	3.6
Identification/proposal of conservation options:			
prediction of outcome*	3.4	3.9	3.7
estimation of resources**	2.7	3.1	2.9
development of new options*	3.2	3.8	3.5
Implementation of routine interventive options:			
minor/moderate interventions**	3.5	4.1	3.8
major interventions to stabilise**	3.5	4.1	3.8
major interventions for study/display*	3.2	3.6	3.4
on-site*	2.6	3.1	2.9
for the range of artefacts/materials normally associated with your area	3.4	3.7	3.5
Application of preventive conservation:			
appropriate handling	3.7	3.7	3.7
appropriate packaging	3.3	3.1	3.2
monitoring environment	3.7	3.7	3.7
maintaining environment	3.6	3.4	3.5
Documentation of artefacts*	4.1	4.4	4.3
Health and safety in conservation	3.9	3.6	3.8

Note: * indicates significant differences at the ten per cent probability level
** indicates significant differences at the one per cent probability level

Source: IES/MGC Survey of Conservation Graduates' Early Career Paths

those working in conservation, the most important skills were the same as those for the sample as a whole listed near the beginning of this section (3.4.1).

3.5.2 Helpfulness of the course in practical skill development

The impact of the course in the development of these practical skills is shown in Table 3.10. The skills which were reported to have been most well developed by the course were:

- assessment/examination of single items or small groups
- documentation of artefacts
- implementation of routine minor/moderate interventions
- implementation of routine major interventions to stabilise
- health and safety in conservation.

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The least well developed were:

- identification/proposal of options: estimation of resources
- implementation of routine on-site interventions
- assessment/examination of collection surveys/plans
- application of preventive conservation: appropriate packaging.

Comparing these scores with the importance respondents attached to the technical skills in their subsequent careers (in section 3.4.1), there is quite a good match between the two. The skills judged to be the most important in a conservation career were also the ones which were well developed on the courses. This was particularly the case for 'assessment/examination of single items or small groups', and 'health and safety'. The biggest mismatch, where a skill was important but was among the least developed during the courses, was 'preventive conservation: appropriate packaging' (scored 3.8 in importance but only 3.2 for development during course). As with practical skills, the remainder of the less well developed skills were felt to have been less important in relation to the others.

Differences by course level

Respondents who had last completed postgraduate courses gave a higher mean score for most of the items (Table 3.10). Exceptions were in the area of application of preventive conservation, and for health and safety in conservation in which postgraduates' mean scores were equal to, or lower than the other group. However, none of these differences were significant.

In general, the mean scores of both groups followed the same pattern but the absolute figures were different, causing significant differences between them (indicated by asterisks in Table 3.10). These differences were found particularly in the areas of identification and implementation of options.

Differences by subsequent career

As before, there were interesting differences between those who were and were not currently working in conservation (Table 3.11). As would be expected, the majority of the skills received a higher mean score from those who were currently working in conservation than from those who were not. The largest significance was found for:

- assessment/examination of single items or small groups
- implementation of routine minor/moderate interventions
- documentation of artefacts.

Table 3.11: Extent to which the conservation course helped to develop particular technical skills, by whether currently working in the conservation industry (mean scores)

	Currently working in conservation?	
	Yes	No
Assessment/examination of artefacts:		
single items or small groups**	4.4	3.9
collection surveys/plans	3.2	3.2
advanced examination techniques	3.6	3.7
Identification/proposal of conservation options:		
prediction of outcome	3.8	3.5
estimation of resources	2.8	3.0
development of new options*	3.6	3.2
Implementation of routine interventive options:		
minor/moderate interventions**	4.0	3.4
major interventions to stabilise*	3.9	3.5
major interventions for study/display*	3.5	3.0
on-site	2.9	2.6
for the range of artefacts/materials normally associated with your area	3.7	3.3
Application of preventive conservation:		
appropriate handling	3.7	3.7
appropriate packaging	3.3	3.3
monitoring environment	3.7	3.7
maintaining environment	3.4	3.7
Documentation of artefacts**	4.4	3.9
Health and safety in conservation	3.8	3.5

Note: * indicates significant differences at the ten per cent probability level
** indicates significant differences at the one per cent probability level

Source: IES/MGC Survey of Conservation Graduates' Early Career Paths

Hence those who were currently working in conservation felt that these skills had been better developed than did those not working in conservation. Surprisingly, some skills achieved higher mean scores from those not working in conservation, although none of the differences were significant.

3.6 Work experience

Overall, 93 per cent of respondents had had some form of work experience during their last conservation course, or had worked as an intern following its completion (Table 3.12). Virtually all of the respondents who had last completed a first or sub-degree course had had some form of work experience, as had almost 90 per cent of postgraduates. More than 80 per cent of respondents had obtained work experience as a part of their course. first and

Table 3.12: Participation in work experience during course and/or internships following graduation, by course level

	First or sub-degree		Postgraduate		All	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Work experience as part of course	58	95.1	37	68.5	95	82.6
Worked as an intern	21	34.4	22	40.7	43	37.4
Work experience not part of course	17	27.9	15	27.8	32	27.8
Neither work experience nor an internship	1	1.6	7	13.0	8	7.0

Source: IES/MGC Survey of Conservation Graduates' Early Career Paths

sub-degree graduates were more likely than postgraduates to have had this form of experience (95 per cent compared to 69 per cent). The proportions of first and sub-degree graduates as well as postgraduates who had done work experience that was not part of their course were the same, at 28 per cent.

It is interesting to observe the work experience histories of respondents, broken down by whether they were or were not currently working in the conservation/heritage field (Table 3.13). As was expected, there were far higher proportions of work experience in the histories of those who were currently working in conservation than in the histories of those who were not. Those who were not currently working in conservation were significantly less likely to have had work experience which was not part of their course. This suggests that gaining relevant experience, in addition to a higher education qualification, may be of crucial importance of for those who wish to pursue a career in conservation.

3.6.1 Who arranged the work experience

Those who reported having done work experience were asked who had arranged it. The key people in arranging work experience were:

Table 3.13: Participation in work experience during course and/or internships following graduation, by subsequent career

	Currently working in conservation?			
	Yes		No	
	N	%	N	%
Work experience as part of course	67	79.8	28	82.4
Worked as an intern**	40	47.6	4	11.8
Work experience not part of course*	28	33.3	6	17.6
Neither work experience nor an internship	5	6.0	4	11.8

Note: * indicates significant differences at the ten per cent probability level
** indicates significant differences at the one per cent probability level

Source: IES/MGC Survey of Conservation Graduates' Early Career Paths

- course tutors or department (52 per cent)
- self (26 per cent)
- tutor and self (16 per cent).

The MGC and the UKIC were also named, but each accounted for less than one per cent of the total. Other sources and informal arrangements were mentioned by three per cent.

The length of respondents' work experience ranged from two weeks to one year, however, the most commonly reported length was eight weeks (27 per cent). In fact, more than half of applicable respondents' work experience had been between six and ten weeks in length (Table 3.14). This proportion was even greater amongst first and sub-degree graduates (62 per cent). Overall, only just over ten per cent had undertaken work experience for longer than 20 weeks, although the figure was double this amongst postgraduates.

Opinions on work experience

Respondents were asked to give their opinions on four aspects of the work experience that they had done whilst on the conservation course. These covered length of the placement, difficulty of the placement, the nature of the work on offer, the extent to which the work experience complemented or contradicted the course. Respondents were asked to rate each aspect of the course using a scale of 1 to 5. The mean scores are shown in Table 3.14.

A mean score of three provided the commonest answer to the length and type of work on offer during work experience (the first three items in Table 3.15). As Table 3.15 shows, there was no great overall dissatisfaction. It was felt that the work experience had been slightly too short, especially in the case of first and sub-degree graduates. All had found the work slightly too easy, and slightly too general, however, the scores were very close to the 'about right' answer. Respondents generally also felt that their work experience had complemented rather than contradicted the course.

Table 3.14: Length of work experience, by course level

	First or sub-degree		Postgraduate		Total	
No. of weeks	N	%	N	%	N	%
1 to 5	5	8.6	13	28.3	18	17.3
6 to 10	36	62.1	19	41.3	55	52.9
11 to 20	14	24.1	5	10.9	19	18.3
21 to 30	1	1.7	3	6.5	4	3.8
31 or more	2	3.4	6	13.0	8	7.7
Total	*58*	*100.0*	*46*	*100.0*	*104*	*100.0*

Source: IES/MGC Survey of Conservation Graduates' Early Career Paths

Table 3.15: Opinions on aspects of work experience, by course level (mean scores)

	First and sub-degree	Postgraduate	Total
Was the work experience... too short (=1), about right (=3) or too long (=5)*	2.3	2.7	2.5
Was the work in the placement... too difficult (=1), about right (=3) or too easy (=5)	3.3	3.3	3.3
Was the work on offer... too general (=1), about right (=3) or too specific (=5)	2.7	2.8	2.8
Did the work experience... complement (=1) or contradict (=5) the course	2.2	1.9	2.0

Note: * indicates significant differences at the ten per cent probability level

Source: IES/MGC Survey of Conservation Graduates' Early Career Paths

There were few differences between the mean responses of the two course level groups. However, postgraduates felt that their work experience had complemented their course to a greater extent than did those who had completed a first or sub-degree.

Where respondents had undertaken work experience as part of their course, the majority of work experience at first and sub-degree level was assessed, whilst at postgraduate level, assessment of work experience appeared to be less likely (Table 3.16).

Some examples of where respondents had undertaken their work experience were:

- private practices (*eg* Plowden and Smith)
- private restorers (*eg* Patrick Corbett, Clare Meridith)
- Doncaster Museum and Art Gallery
- Fitzwilliam Museum
- Ipswich Borough Council Museum
- Tate Gallery.

Work experience was seen to be very important by many, in building confidence and skills in a real world setting:

Table 3.16: Whether the work experience was assessed as part of course work, by course level

	First and sub-degree		Postgraduate		All	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	51	89.5	13	36.1	64	68.8
No	3	5.3	13	36.1	16	17.2
Don't know	3	5.3	10	27.8	13	14.0
Total	*57*	*100.0*	*36*	*100.0*	*93*	*100.0*

Source: IES/MGC Survey of Conservation Graduates' Early Career Paths

'I enjoyed my placement very much – it developed my skills in many areas of conservation and built confidence in my abilities. A whole years placement was very valuable.'

'Any work experience done at college is a great help to future employment – both in experience and confidence.'

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4. The Careers

This chapter examines the early careers of conservation graduates on the basis of the postal survey of recent graduates, and the follow-up telephone interviews.

The main messages to emerge are:

- the determination of conservation graduates to work in their chosen field, with most of those not working in conservation hoping to return
- this is despite the obstacles of low initial wages and the difficulty in getting established in the absence of an internship
- the wide disparities in terms of opportunities and success shown by those who studied at the first or sub-degree level compared with those who studied at the postgraduate level
- the underplaying of the importance of the private sector as potential employers by the courses, especially at the first degree level.

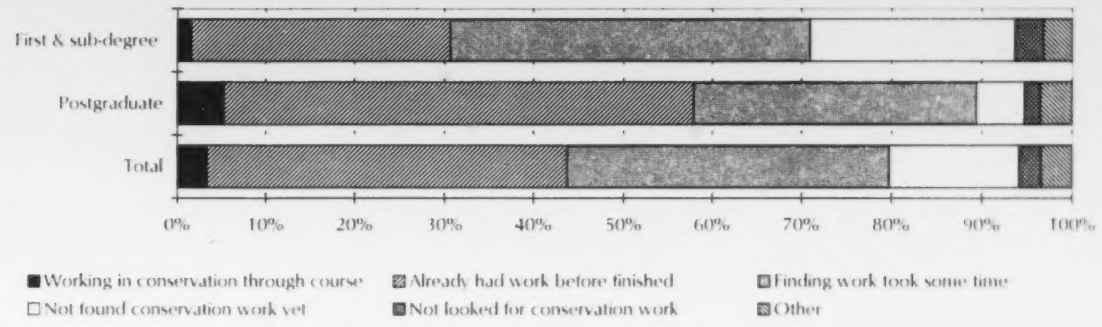
4.1 Conservation work

Overall, about four out of five (78.8 per cent) of the recent graduates had obtained conservation work. This figure dropped to 69.6 per cent amongst the first and sub-degree graduates, and rose to 88.9 per cent amongst the postgraduate level graduates. The main difference between these two groups were that the postgraduates were more likely to have set up conservation employment before they finished studying. Of the postgraduates, 58.7 per cent had already obtained employment compared to 30.4 per cent of first and sub-degree graduates.

4.1.1 Time seeking conservation work

For those who were not already in conservation work at the end of their course, postgraduates took longer on average to find work; 15.2 weeks compared with 12.2 weeks for first and sub-degree graduates. However, this difference is not statistically significant as there was an abnormal pattern in the time taken for postgraduates to obtain conservation work. What appears to have happened is that initially postgraduates found work faster,

Figure 4.1: Entry into conservation work, by qualification level



Source: IES/MGC Survey of Conservation Graduates' Early Career Paths

but then, as time wore on, they were less likely to seek and obtain non-conservation work. This meant that the remainder took longer to find work. This is the pattern shown in Table 4.2, which groups the time taken to find conservation work into ranges. This decision to 'hold out' for conservation work amongst the postgraduates is understandable, given the higher investments they will have made in their training.

4.2 Non-conservation work

Respondents were asked whether they had thought of, or had undertaken, non-conservation work. Figure 4.2 displays the responses from Table 4.3, overall:

- 23.5 per cent had taken non-conservation work
- 3.4 per cent had applied for non-conservation work, but not taken it up
- 9.2 per cent had made enquiries, but taken it no further
- 16.0 had thought about it, but no more
- while 39.5 per cent had never considered no-conservation work.

Table 4.1: Entry into conservation work, by qualification level

	First and sub-degree		Postgraduate		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Working in conservation through course	1	1.4	3	4.8	4	3.0
Already had work before finished	20	29.0	34	54.0	54	40.9
Finding work took some time	27	39.1	19	30.2	46	34.8
Not found conservation work yet	17	24.6	3	4.8	20	15.2
Not looked for conservation work	2	2.9	2	3.2	4	3.0
Other	2	2.9	2	3.2	4	3.0
Total	*69*	*100.0*	*63*	*100.0*	*132*	*100.0*

Source: IES/MGC Survey of Conservation Graduates' Early Career Paths

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Table 4.2: Time spent seeking conservation work, by qualification level

	First and sub-degree		Postgraduate		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Less than 4 weeks	5	18.5	6	31.6	11	23.9
5 to 8 weeks	8	29.6	2	10.5	10	21.7
9 to 16 weeks	6	22.2	6	31.6	12	26.1
17 to 26 weeks	8	29.6	3	15.8	11	23.9
More than 26 weeks	–	0.0	2	10.5	2	4.3
Total	*27*	*100.0*	*19*	*100.0*	*46*	*100.0*

Source: IES/MGC Survey of Conservation Graduates' Early Career Paths

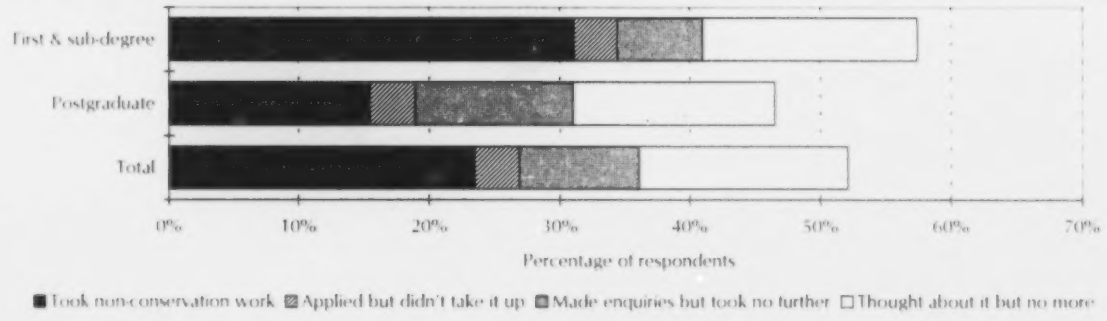
Again, there were important differences by the level of conservation qualification obtained. First and sub-degree graduates were much more likely to have taken up non-conservation work.

Of first and sub-degree graduates, 30.9 per cent had taken non-conservation work, and an additional 11.8 per cent felt that their conservation career had never started. This compares with the postgraduates of whom only 15.6 per cent had taken non-conservation work, and only 7.8 per cent felt their career had never started.

Many of the non-conservation jobs were related to conservation. They included:

- 'Collections assistant at a national museum.'
- 'The non-conservation work is temporary (I hope) in between short-erm contracts, mostly supermarket work.'
- 'Antiques business, working for a large firm of auctioneers, and running a salvage business.'
- 'General archaeology, human remains lab technician, and finds processing.'

Figure 4.2: Consideration of non-conservation work, by qualification level



Source: IES/MGC Survey of Conservation Graduates' Early Career Paths

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Table 4.3: Consideration of non-conservation work, by qualification level

	First and sub-degree		Postgraduate		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Career not got started	8	11.8	5	7.8	13	9.8
Thought about it but no more	12	17.6	9	14.1	21	15.9
Made enquiries but took no further	4	5.9	7	10.9	11	8.3
Applied but didn't take it up	2	2.9	2	3.1	4	3.0
Took non-conservation work	21	30.9	10	15.6	31	23.5
Never considered non-conservation work	21	30.9	31	48.4	52	39.4
Total	*68*	*100.0*	*64*	*100.0*	*132*	*100.0*

Source: IES/MGC Survey of Conservation Graduates' Early Career Paths

- 'Decorative art work, *ie* specialist paint effects and gilding.'
- '... various part-time work, unloading lorries and gardening to supplement income from restoration work.'

Those who had taken non-conservation work were asked whether they expected to return to conservation work. The pattern of replies is shown in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 shows that nearly three out of five (56.3 per cent) of those in non-conservation jobs expected to return to conservation work. Only 12.5 per cent did not expect to return and a further 31.3 per cent were unsure. Postgraduates were more convinced that they would return to conservation work, with all those who were sure (81.8 per cent) believing they would return. On the other hand, 19 per cent of first or sub-degree graduates, who were working outside the conservation area, felt they would not return.

The importance of a range of factors influencing those who had either considered or actually taken non-conservation work are examined as in Table 4.5. The one to five scale, had 1 representing 'not important at all' and 5 as 'extremely important'. Therefore the higher the average rating the more important the factor. This shows that the most important factors were other reasons (4.27) which were not included in our list. These included:

Table 4.4: Expectation of return to conservation work of those in non-conservation work

	First and sub-degree		Postgraduate		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	9	42.9	9	81.8	18	56.3
No	4	19.0		0.0	4	12.5
Don't know	8	38.1	2	18.2	10	31.3
Total	*21*	*100.0*	*11*	*100.0*	*32*	*100.0*

Source: IES/MGC Survey of Conservation Graduates' Early Career Paths

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Table 4.5: Importance of various factors when considering non-conservation work, by qualification level (mean scores)

	First and sub-degree	Postgraduate	Total
Another reason	4.09	4.75	4.27
Career prospects in conservation were limited	4.05	4.11	4.08
It was difficult to get conservation related work	4.22	3.85	4.06
I was dissatisfied with my income in conservation*	3.73	4.48	4.05
The available conservation work was unattractive	3.58	3.89	3.71
The terms/conditions of employment were unsatisfactory	3.57	3.85	3.69
I found conservation related work unchallenging	2.83	2.93	2.87

Based on the average scores of a scale where 1 represents 'not important at all' and 5 is 'extremely important'
Note: * significant a the 10% level

Source: IES/MGC Survey of Conservation Graduates' Early Career Paths

- 'wanted to study another subject'
- 'very few conservation jobs available'
- 'there are just no employment prospects unless you are from a well connected family'
- 'did stone carving on the course and liked it, so became a carver'.

Apart from these factors, the most important factor was limited career prospects in conservation. Following close behind, was the difficulty in getting conservation related work. Almost as important was dissatisfaction with their income in conservation, which was significantly more important to postgraduates than first or sub-degree graduates.

Ranking below 'neither important nor unimportant' was 'I found conservation work unchallenging'. This again reinforces the view that conservation graduates have a high commitment to the conservation, and are only deterred by low salaries and a lack of job openings.

4.3 Types of work and contracts

Respondents were asked about the sector of their most recent employment. The details of the response are given in Figure 4.3 and Table 4.6. Overall, the largest sector of employment or type of work undertaken by conservation graduates, was self-employment, followed by the national not-for-profit sector.

Over a quarter of the graduates (26.9 per cent) were self-employed. This was particularly the case with the postgraduates where 32.3 per cent (nearly one-third) were self-employed. Given this propensity to self-employment, it is perhaps not surprising that many of the questionnaire comments, and those from the

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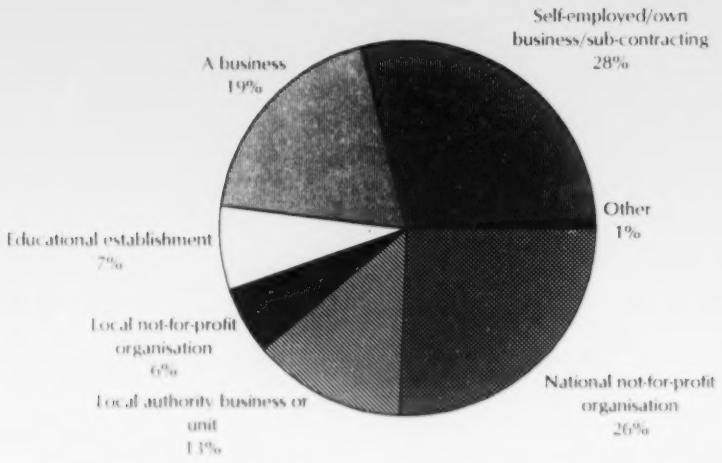
Figure 4.3: Sector of most recent employment



Source: IES/MGC Survey of Conservation Graduates' Early Career Paths

follow-up interviews, related to this. Generally, these comments focused on how little emphasis was put on the skills necessary for self-employment and how this type of employment appeared to be denigrated. For example:

> *'Nothing relating to business matters, eg estimating for work. It was assumed graduates would go directly into museums or research work.'*
>
> *'I did not receive any help with starting my own business, all my tutors were interested in was 'their' students working for museums, stately homes, large private practices etc.'*
>
> *'They gave good practical skills, but not enough information about setting up your own business or how to get contacts. But they were very good at passing on jobs if a contact came their way.'*

Table 4.6: Sector of employment, by educational level

	First and sub-degree		Postgraduate		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
National not-for-profit organisation (including government related organisations)	17	24.6	17	26.2	34	25.4
A local authority/local authority business or unit	9	13.0	8	12.3	17	12.7
Local not-for-profit organisation	5	7.2	2	3.1	7	5.2
A university, college or other educational establishment	5	7.2	5	7.7	10	7.5
A business	18	26.1	10	15.4	28	20.9
Self-employed/own business/sub-contracting	15	21.7	21	32.3	36	26.9
Other	–	–	2	3.1	2	1.5
Total	*69*	*100.0*	*65*	*100.0*	*134*	*100.0*

Source: IES/MGC Survey of Conservation Graduates' Early Career Paths

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These sorts of comment are familiar and echo studies looking at graduate self-employment (Tackey and Perryman, 1999) and arts, crafts and design graduates (Harvey and Blackwell, 1999). It would appear that the higher education system, from tutors to careers services, is particularly poor at giving advice about self-employment.

The second most important sector of employment is the national not-for-profit organisations, which includes the national museums, government, and bodies such as the National Trust. This almost appears to be the traditional area of employment for conservation graduates, with many of the internships and subsequent high status employment in this sector. As such, the education and internship system appears to be designed to generate people to work in this sector. However, it needs to be realised that at 25.4 per cent, or virtually a quarter of employment, this sector is, in practice, a minority destination. The combination of self-employment and private sector businesses represent 47.8 per cent, or nearly twice the level of employment in the national not-for-profit sector.

When the analysis of sector of employment is limited to those who self-define their work as in conservation, as is done in Table 4.7, the picture remains remarkably similar. The national not-for-profit sector becomes more important, employing just over one-third (34.4 per cent) of the recent graduates. The private sector businesses also become less important, employing only 10.8 per cent, although the percentage who are self-employed remains the same at 26.9 per cent. In part, some of this may be semantic, as many individuals refer to private sector conservation activities as 'restoration' rather than 'conservation'. (Restoration is used more often to describe the conservation of smaller and less valuable objects.)

Table 4.7: Sector of employment for those doing conservation work, by educational level

	First and sub-degree		Postgraduate		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
National not-for-profit organisation (including government related organisations)	16	36.4	16	32.7	32	34.4
A local authority/local authority business or unit	6	13.6	7	14.3	13	14.0
Local not-for-profit organisation	4	9.1	2	4.1	6	6.5
A university, college or other educational establishment	3	6.8	3	6.1	6	6.5
A business	5	11.4	5	10.2	10	10.8
Self-employed/own business/sub-contracting	10	22.7	15	30.6	25	26.9
Other		0.0	1	2.0	1	1.1
Total	*44*	*100.0*	*49*	*100.0*	*93*	*100.0*

Source: IES/MGC Survey of Conservation Graduates' Early Career Paths

Table 4.8: Advice on employment prospects in conservation and related fields

	First and sub-degree		Postgraduate		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Before conservation course begun	12	16.9	23	35.4	35	25.7
While undertaking conservation course	35	49.3	37	56.9	72	52.9
Once conservation course finished	11	15.5	15	23.1	26	19.1
None	32	45.1	24	36.9	56	41.2
Total	*71*	*100.0*	*65*	*100.0*	*136*	*100.0*

Note: This was a multiple choice question, therefore the columns add up to more than the total

Source: IES/MGC Survey of Conservation Graduates' Early Career Paths

4.4 Careers advice

As already mentioned, there were many comments about careers advice in relation to self-employment and private sector work. Table 4.8 gives details of the occasions before, during and after the conservation course, when advice on employment prospects was recalled as being offered. The most notable feature of Table 4.8 is that as many as 43.9 per cent do not recall such advice at any stage.

4.5 Career histories

Career histories of graduates are getting more complex and turbulent with periods of unemployment, further study, self-employment interrupting the classical picture of someone settling down to a career (Connor and Pollard, 1996; Connor *et al.*, 1997). Conservation graduates are no exception to this pattern and in many ways present a more extreme case of initial career turbulence. In part, this is due to the greater propensity to self-employment amongst arts and craft graduates in general (Tackey and Perryman, 1999). However, especially in the archaeological area, with the cyclical nature of rescue archaeology driving the growth in short term contracts, the conservation section appears more turbulent than most.

Respondents were asked whether they were working as an employee, working in some other context, unemployed or unavailable for employment for each six month period back to April 1995. Only 22.4 per cent of the conservation graduates had been in employment every six months since they graduated. Only 10.9 per cent had been in continuous self-employment. Most self-employment followed periods of employment or further training, suggesting that the conservation qualification in itself was insufficient to get established on a self-employed basis. The remaining 64.7 per cent (or over two-thirds) had some complex mixture of the various possible labour market statuses.

It is clear from the many questionnaire and interview comments that the graduates had hoped for less turbulent post-qualification transitions. They also felt that they had been led to believe by their tutors that the transition would be easier. In part, the problem appears to have been an increasingly turbulent period in the museums and galleries sector, with freezes on permanent recruitment and an increase in contracting out of conservation work. The amount of rescue archaeology, and the subsequent conservation employment, is obviously linked the level of building activity. The level of building activity, especially of roads, has been turbulent, leading to knock-on effects in terms of the employment of conservators. The tutors will always be basing their comments on the past when talking to their students, which means that their advice cannot be accurate in periods of rapid change.

At the same time, it is clear that the opportunities to earn a living on the basis of self-employment have increased. This is largely in response to a growth in contracting out of conservation services. There is a strong case for more material and training on self-employment in the conservation sector to respond to this growing pattern.

Table 4.9: Nature of employment, by level of qualification

	First and sub-degree		Postgraduate		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Full-time (more than 30 hours per week)	56	80.0	52	83.9	108	81.8
Part-time	14	20.0	10	16.1	24	18.2
both	70	100.0	62	100.0	132	100.0
Unpaid volunteer	4	6.0	2	3.2	6	4.6
Paid	63	94.0	61	96.8	124	95.4
both	67	100.0	63	100.0	130	100.0
Permanent contract	30	43.1	22	33.9	52	38.5
Temporary contract	35	56.9	43	66.1	78	61.5
both	65	100.0	65	100.0	130	100.0
In the conservation/heritage industry	44	65.6	49	77.2	93	71.2
Not in the conservation/heritage industry	24	34.4	14	22.8	38	28.8
both	68	100.0	63	100.0	131	100.0
Hands on conservation job	42	63.3	53	82.8	95	72.9
Not a hands on conservation job	25	36.7	11	17.2	36	27.1
both	67	100.0	64	100.0	131	100.0
Only career related activity	55	80.3	46	69.5	101	75.0
Part of a portfolio of activities	13	19.7	19	30.5	32	25.0
both	68	100.0	65	100.0	133	100.0

Source: IES/MGC Survey of Conservation Graduates' Early Career Paths

4.6 Case studies

In many ways, the bare statistics presented above conceal much of the complexity of peoples' careers, omitting the importance of parallel activities such as: volunteer work, part-time private restoration, or conservation work. This detail only comes out of the time-line data, the comments obtained from the questionnaires, and the follow-up telephone interviews. This sort of data is best examined in terms of exemplar case studies. However, much of the most interesting data can potentially identify individuals. Therefore, to maintain individuals' confidentiality, we have created anonymised career histories based on the questionnaires and the follow-up telephone interviews. The two case studies have been selected to show the differences between someone who obtained an internship and someone who did not. Both have been successful, but with differing paths. The many changes in location and type of employment are typical of most of the career histories examined.

Case study one

A male painting conservation graduate.

After completing his conservation course in 1991 he obtained a one year MGC internship with a national collection. This was followed by a one year contract with the same national collection. There followed a six month contract with a heritage agency starting in 1993. This contract then became permanent in 1994 with the same heritage agency, which he has held to the present.

The internship was particularly valuable as working with the national collection offered opportunities and the practical experience that more or less mirrors the current post. The similarity between the requirements of the current post and the internship almost certainly secured the permanent post.

Apart from practising the hands-on requirements of his profession, he feels that the internship benefited him in three ways. Firstly, through the prestige of the national collection, secondly via the prestige of his supervisor, and thirdly because just to have received a MGC internship confers kudos of its own.

Case study two

A female ceramics conservation graduate.

Obtained an first degree in art in 1991 and worked for one and a half years teaching art. Then undertook a two-year ceramics conservation course. Before the end of the course she had arranged a job with a private workshop starting in September 1995. Since January 1998 she has been self-employed, undertaking conservation contracts for the National Trust. She has never considered non-conservation work. This is exactly where she wants to be and is

generally happy with the careers advice she received and the balance between theory and practice on the course.

Despite being confident that she could set up her own business, she recognises the potential benefits that an internship would have offered. Apart from a relatively safe and supportive environment for confidence building, an internship would have offered easier access to the 'network' of conservators through which many jobs are obtained. An internship in a private workshop would have offered the business skills lacking from the training course. However, any such internships should only be in UKIC approved workshops.

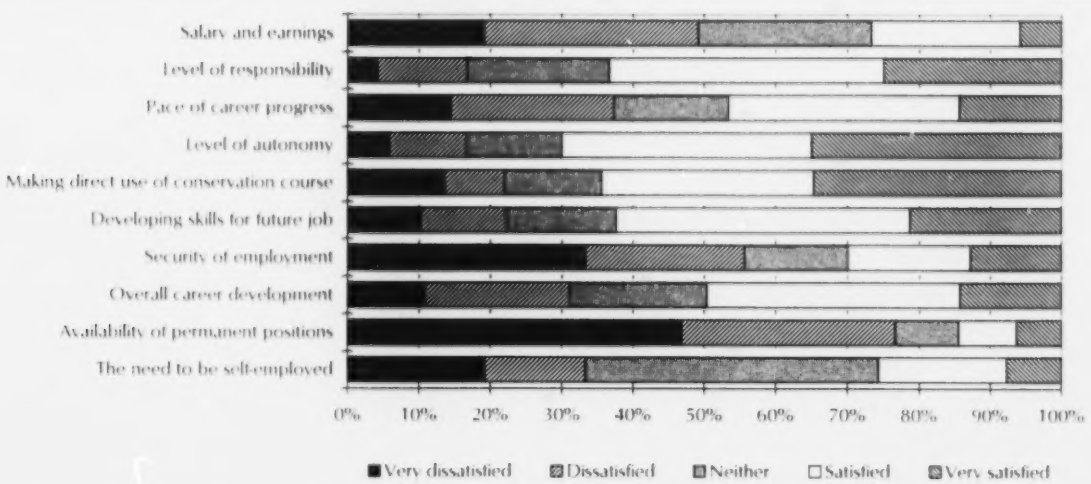
4.7 Career satisfaction

Career satisfaction is difficult to measure as the levels of satisfaction depend on the dimensions individuals choose to use in valuing and judging their career. Someone wanting high income could be dissatisfied by a career that offers a low income, while someone wanting to use their manual skills might be perfectly happy with that income.

To deal with this problem the respondents were asked to rate how satisfied they were with their career in terms of a range of dimensions. The five point scale went from 1 representing 'very dissatisfied' to 5 representing 'very satisfied'.

Figure 4.4 illustrates the levels of satisfaction with a range of conservation careers related issues. The area of the greatest dissatisfaction is 'availability of permanent positions'. Here nearly half (45.9 per cent) of the respondents are 'very dissatisfied' and a further 30.3 per cent are 'dissatisfied'. The next area of dissatisfaction is the related one of 'security of employment'. Almost one-third (32.3 per cent) of respondents were 'very dissatisfied' with this and a further 20.8 per cent were

Figure 4.4: Career satisfaction in terms of various measures



Source: IES/MGC Survey of Conservation Graduates' Early Career Paths

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54

Table 4.10: Career satisfaction factors, by qualification level (mean score)

	First and sub-degree	Postgraduate	Total
Level of autonomy	3.71	3.98	3.84
Level of responsibility	3.65	3.81	3.73
Making direct use of conservation course **	3.30	4.02	3.66
Developing skills for future job *	3.32	3.78	3.54
Overall career development	3.06	3.39	3.22
Pace of career progress	3.03	3.22	3.12
The need to be self-employed	2.71	2.96	2.84
Salary and earnings	2.65	2.66	2.66
Security of employment	2.64	2.51	2.58
Availability of permanent positions	1.94	2.05	1.99

Note * significant at the ten per cent level
** significant at the 1 per cent level

Source: IES/MGC Survey of Conservation Graduates' Early Career Paths

'dissatisfied' with 'security of employment'. The next area of dissatisfaction was 'salary and earnings', 18.8 per cent were 'very dissatisfied' and 29.3 per cent were 'dissatisfied'.

Areas where satisfaction outweighed dissatisfaction were:

- 'level of responsibility': 40.3 per cent 'very satisfied'
- 'developing skills for future job': 39.8 per cent 'very satisfied'
- 'level of autonomy': 34.6 per cent 'very satisfied', and
- 'overall career development': 34.4 per cent 'very satisfied'.

When the levels of satisfaction are examined by level of qualification, as in Table 4.10, distinct patterns emerge. Statistically, postgraduates are more satisfied that they are making direct use of their conservation course and more likely to believe that they are developing their skills for future jobs.

In terms of whether or not the respondents were in full-time conservation work, other patterns emerge as shown in Table 4.11. As might be expected, those in full-time conservation work are generally more satisfied. Areas with the largest differences are 'making direct use of conservation course' and 'overall career development'.

4.8 The expectations of the future

Asking questions about people's expected career trajectories is difficult, as the responses are either tinged with their hopes or their fears. As such, we asked what sort of position people felt that they were most likely to be in and what sort of position they would most like to be in, five and ten years time.

Table 4.11: Career satisfaction factors, by success in obtaining full-time conservation work (mean score)

	Full-time conservation	PT or non-conservation	Total
Making direct use of conservation course*	3.91	4.29	4.12
Level of autonomy	3.97	4.07	4.03
Level of responsibility	3.89	3.93	3.91
Developing skills for future job	3.63	3.87	3.76
Overall career development	3.43	3.59	3.51
Pace of career progress	3.29	3.38	3.34
The need to be self-employed *	2.57	3.32	3.00
Salary and earnings	2.51	2.71	2.62
Security of employment	2.44	2.66	2.56
Availability of permanent positions *	1.61	2.14	1.89

Note * significant a the ten per cent level

Source: IES/MGC Survey of Conservation Graduates' Early Career Paths

Figure 4.5 shows the positions respondents feel they are most likely to be in five years from now. Overall, nearly half (46.4 per cent) felt they were most likely to be working in the conservation sector doing the same sort of work as they are currently. A further 12.7 per cent though they would be also working in the conservation sector, but in a more senior capacity. This means that 59.1 per cent expected to be in the conservation sector in five years time. The over-30 year olds, males, those with first or sub-degree qualifications, and those currently employed full time in conservation were more likely to expect to be in conservation at the same level. Postgraduates were more likely to think they would be in a more senior conservation position. However, many people expected a status combining more than one of our categories.

Comparing where people expect to be, and where the would like to be in five and ten years time, as in Figures 4.6 and 4.7, allows a measure of their hopes and aspirations to be examined.

At the five year mark more respondents would like to be working in the conservation sector than expect to be working in the sector, and far more would like to be working at a higher level than expect to. More respondents expect to be working in an unrelated area than they would like. Otherwise, expectations and desires appear to be fairly well matched.

At the ten year mark the patterns are pretty much the same as for the five year mark. However, far more people expect to be working at a higher level either inside or outside the conservation sector.

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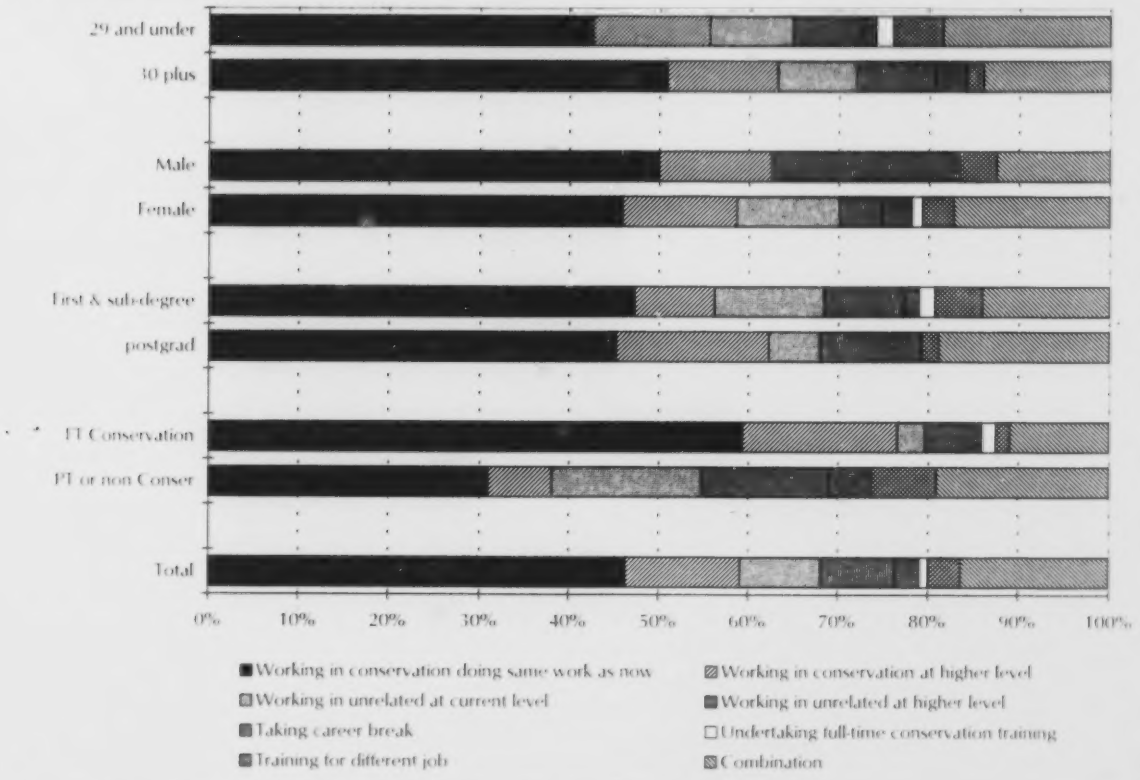
Figure 4.5: Most likely position in five years time, by age, gender, level of qualification and full-time conservation work or not



Source: IES/MGC Survey of Conservation Graduates' Early Career Paths

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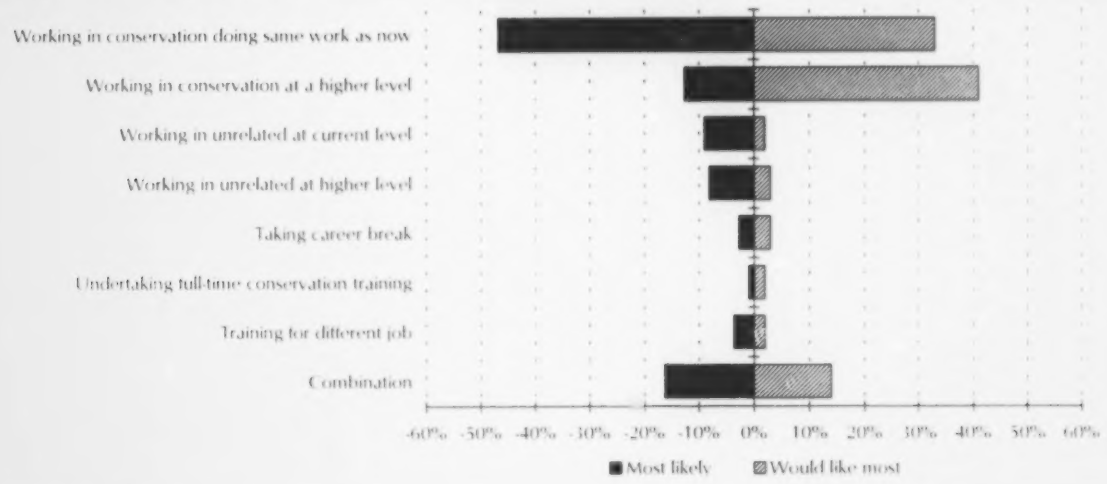
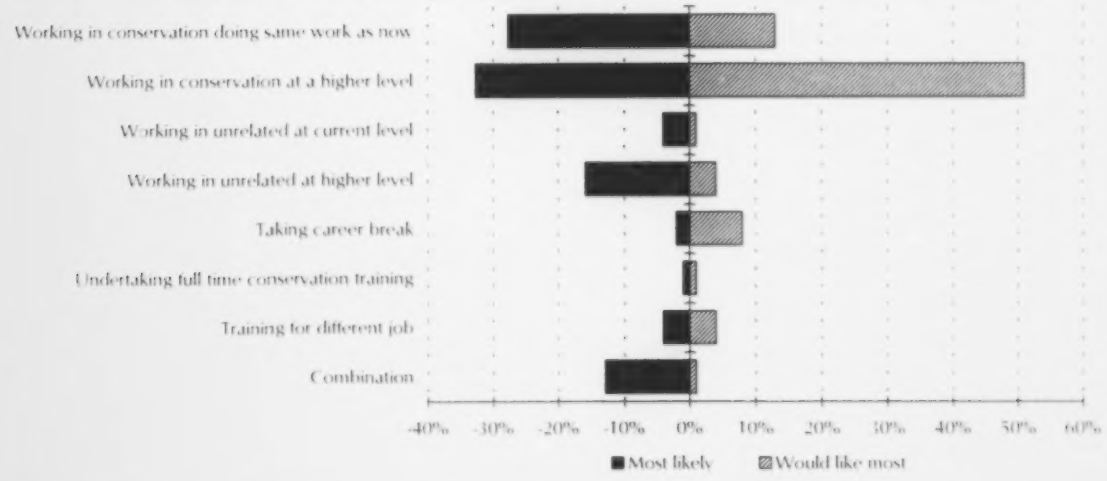
Figure 4.6: What is most likely and what would be most liked in five years time


Working in conservation doing same work as now
Working in conservation at a higher level
Working in unrelated at current level
Working in unrelated at higher level
Taking career break
Undertaking full-time conservation training
Training for different job
Combination
-60% -50% -40% -30% -20% -10% 0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60%
Most likely
Would like most

Source: IES/MGC Survey of Conservation Graduates' Early Career Paths

Figure 4.7: What is most likely and what would be most liked in ten years time


Working in conservation doing same work as now
Working in conservation at a higher level
Working in unrelated at current level
Working in unrelated at higher level
Taking career break
Undertaking full time conservation training
Training for different job
Combination
-40% -30% -20% -10% 0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60%
Most likely
Would like most

Source: IES/MGC Survey of Conservation Graduates' Early Career Paths

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5. Internships and Their Value

This chapter focuses on the role and nature of post-qualification internships in the professional development of conservators.

The chapter examines:

- the benefits of an internship
- the nature of internships
- good practice and internships, and
- professionalism and internships.

5.1 The benefits of an internship

There are many benefits of an internship, the most obvious of which is subsequent employment in the conservation sector.

5.1.1 Internships and subsequent employment

Table 5.1 shows that those that have had an internship are far more likely to be working in the conservation sector. Nearly 90 per cent of those who had an internship are working in the sector compared with only 60.7 per cent of those who did not have an internship.

Of course, it could be that those who are selected for an internship are better in some way, and hence are more likely to stay in the sector. Equally, undertaking an internship could be seen as reflecting greater commitment to the area. However, based on the comments on the questionnaires, the internship itself is the most important factor. For example:

Table 5.1: Internships and subsequent conservation employment

	In conservation industry		Not in conservation		Total
	N	%	N	%	N
Had an internship	43	89.6	5	10.4	48
No internship	51	60.7	33	39.3	84
Total	*94*	*71.2*	*38*	*28.8*	*132*

Source: IES/MGC Survey of Conservation Graduates' Early Career Paths

'The internship was vital in my career. On graduation I applied for many posts and was told that I had insufficient practical experience. The internship helped my practice enormously, enabling me to use a wide range of materials and also develop the skills necessary for a "proper" working environment.'

'The internship has greatly assisted my career, it consolidates work done on the course. — Friends and colleagues who have not done an internship are only able to work as field archaeologists; not artefact conservators. Hands-on experience has allowed me to gain confidence in developing independent, problem solving skills.'

5.1.2 Other benefits of an internship

In part, the internship offers the extension of practical hands-on experience in a controlled environment, but at the same time working with real artefacts. However, a range of other benefits of an internship beyond the practical skills aspects were identified, including the following.

- An increase in confidence was mentioned by numerous respondents and interviewees. The sense that they can really do the job appears to be a very important additional benefit to many interns.
- Access to the network of conservators, which is vital for obtaining work either as an employee or as a contractor. These contacts have value for a long time after the internship.
- Gaining the imprimatur of the institution where the internship was undertaken. This can either be in terms of the status of the institution, the size or status of its collection, or in terms of the status of the supervisor.
- The reflected status of the internship. MGC internships are seen as difficult to obtain and so having obtained one is seen as a form of accreditation.
- An understanding that time is money, and that often institutions do not have either the time, or the money, to conserve everything to the highest standards.
- Time to develop and enhance their portfolios.

5.1.3 Internships and work experience

In many ways internships can be seen as an extended and special version of the work experience that is offered as part of most of the conservation courses. However, apart from length, there appears to be a number of other differences between work experience and internships. The fact that internships occur after the end of the academic training would seem to be the most important.

Table 5.2: Work experience internships and subsequent conservation employment

	In conservation industry		Not in conservation		Total
	N	%	N	%	N
Work experience as part of course	77	70.6	32	29.4	109
Internship	43	89.6	5	10.4	48
Work experience not as part of course	29	82.9	6	17.1	35
No work experience	5	55.6	4	44.4	9
Total	*94*	*71.2*	*38*	*28.8*	*132*

Note: this was a multiple choice question therefore columns sum to more than the total

Source: IES/MGC Survey of Conservation Graduates' Early Career Paths

Table 5.2 compares the proportions subsequently in conservation employment in terms of whether or not they undertook work experience or an internship. This shows that those with no work experience are the least likely to be in conservation employment, with 44.4 per cent not in conservation employment. Work experience as part of a course is associated with 70.6 per cent in conservation employment, and work experience not as part of the course is associated with 82.9 per cent in conservation employment. However, work experience generally is associated with lower probabilities of working in conservation than an internship.

5.2 The nature of internships

Given that internships are associated with greater success in the career of choice, it is important to determine whether this is due to any characteristics of the interns rather than the internship itself.

5.2.1 Who gets internships

Table 5.3 examines internships and work experience in terms of the level of course undertaken, and Table 5.4 by gender.

Table 5.3: Work experience and internships, by level of course

	First and sub-degree		Postgraduate		Total
	N	%	N	%	N
Work experience as part of course	67	60.4	44	39.6	111
Internship	24	50.0	24	50.0	48
Work experience not as part of course	18	51.4	17	48.6	35
No work experience	1	11.1	8	88.9	9
Total	*70*	*52.2*	*64*	*47.8*	*134*

Source: IES/MGC Survey of Conservation Graduates' Early Career Paths

Table 5.4: Work experience and internships, by gender

	Male		Female		Total
	N	%	N	%	N
Work experience as part of course	20	17.7	93	82.3	113
Internship	8	16.0	42	84.0	50
Work experience not as part of course	6	16.7	30	83.3	36
No work experience	7	77.8	2	22.2	9
Total	*30*	*21.9*	*107*	*78.1*	*137*

Source: IES/MGC Survey of Conservation Graduates' Early Career Paths

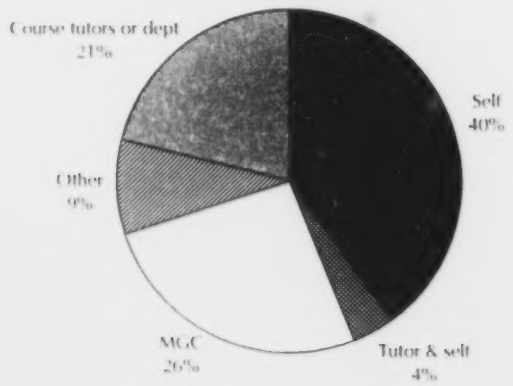
Table 5.3 shows that internships are only slightly more likely to be offered to those who have completed a postgraduate qualification compared with those completing a first or sub-degree qualification. Half the internships went to postgraduates, while only 47.8 per cent of the graduates were from this level; in practice this difference was not statistically significant.

On the other hand, first and sub-degree graduates were more likely to have undertaken work experience as part of their course than postgraduates. In part, this is probably because the length of most Masters or Postgraduate Diploma courses means that there is less opportunity for a work placement.

5.2.2 Who organised the internship

Figure 5.1 shows the breakdown of responsibility for organisation of internships. Here, over four out of ten interns say they organised the internship themselves. The next largest category was the MGC at 28 per cent, with the course tutors or department credited with organising a further 19 per cent of the internships.

Figure 5.1: Responsibility for organising internships



Source: IES/MGC Survey of Conservation Graduates' Early Career Paths

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5.2.3 Length of internships

The commonest length of internship was one year, with over half (54.0 per cent) of internships this length. However, 24.0 per cent were for periods of less than 26 weeks and 15.2 per cent for 12 or less weeks. On the other hand, ten per cent of internships were for more than one year.

5.2.4 Paid or unpaid internships

Much of the variation in length of internships appears to be determined by whether they are paid or not. Table 5.5 examines the relationship between length and payment. Some of the shorter internships seem to be very similar to work experience, as 77.8 per cent of the internships of 12 weeks or less were unpaid. All of the one year internships were paid, as were two-thirds of those lasting from three months to a year. However, one out of the five internships lasting more than a year was unpaid.

5.2.5 Aspects of internships

Respondents were asked to rate the length of their internship on the basis of it being too long, too short or about right. At the same time they were asked whether the work was too hard or too easy; whether the work was too general or too specific; and whether the internship complemented or contradicted their course. Table 5.6 details the responses to these questions.

Four out of five interns felt that the length of their internship was about right, with the rest wanting longer internships. In terms of how hard the work was, 78.0 per cent felt it was about right. Slightly more thought the work was too easy, than those thinking it was too hard.

In terms of generality and specificity, the internships seem to have hit the right balance with 87.8 per cent thinking the balance was about right. The internships are reported as complementing the course by 53.1 per cent and only 8.2 per cent feeling that they verged towards contradiction.

Table 5.5: Length of internship by whether it was paid or unpaid

	Paid		Unpaid		Total
	N	%	N	%	N
12 weeks or less	2	22.2	7	77.8	9
3 months to year	6	66.7	3	33.3	9
One year	27	100.0	–	–	27
More than a year	4	80.0	1	20.0	5
Total	*39*	*78.0*	*11*	*22.0*	*50*

Source: IES/MGC Survey of Conservation Graduates' Early Career Paths

Table 5.6: Aspects of internships (on scale of 1 to 5)

Views on length of internship

	Too short	2	3	4	Too long
N	5	5	40	–	–
%	10.0	10.0	80.0	–	–

Difficulty of work in the internship

	Too hard	2	3	4	Too easy
N	–	4	39	6	1
%	–	8.0	78.0	12.0	2.0

The work on offer in the internship

	Too general	2	3	4	Too specific
N	–	2	43	4	–
%	–	4.1	87.8	8.2	–

Internship and course

	Complement	2	3	4	Contradict the course
N	26	13	6	4	–
%	53.1	26.5	12.2	8.2	–

Source: IES/MGC Survey of Conservation Graduates' Early Career Paths

5.3 Good practice and internships

On the basis of the written comments on the questionnaires, the follow-up telephone interviews, and the key-informants interviews, a range of good practices regarding internships can be identified.

Those covering the content and nature of internships include:

- a structured, written plan covering aims, objectives and tasks at the beginning of the internship
- a range of tasks rather than a single project
- seeing something through from assessment and diagnosis, to completion and documentation of conservation
- time set aside in advance to add to the intern's portfolio
- feedback to course (preferably via a visit to the institution by course tutor)
- neutral mentors (possibly the course tutor or from the funding body) to advise the intern and mediate if necessary between the intern and the supervisor
- examining the schemes for Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) which have many of the elements mentioned above as a model for internships.

Other ideas relating to how internships are allocated included:

- having institutions bid for an internship with linked money to cover supervision. It was felt that this would increase the likelihood of smaller private sector workshops hosting interns
- limiting internships to a period of three years after qualifying, to emphasise that they are for newly qualified graduates and to deter the granting of serial internships to particular individuals
- getting the various bodies that fund internships to agree a minimum salary, if not a common salary, to bring the range of salaries offered, and status attached, more into line with each other.

5.3.1 An employment relationship

Unpaid internships should be regarded as post-qualifying work experience, as the status of internships can only be undermined by people offering to do them for nothing. This, in turn, means that an internship should be a paid period of post-qualifying practical training lasting a year. This may sound like an semantic quibble. However, the value of internships in setting a professional standard could be called into doubt by people essentially purchasing this imprimatur through short periods of unpaid work experience.

There are other advantages of maintaining an employment relationship. It gives the intern and the institution a clear legal basis for the relationship and provides the mutual protections of employment law. Further aspects of the internship relationship and the potential linkage to a professional status are explored in Chapter 6.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusions

6.1.1 Numbers and initial conservation employment

Concern had been expressed at the growth in the numbers studying conservation. This increase has occurred at the first degree level, with the development of two new courses. However, no substantial or sustained impact on the percentage of students initially entering conservation employment can be detected in the first destinations data. The fact that first degree student numbers have been sustained on the new courses, and the existing courses, indicates that they are meeting a demand from students to study the subject. It has been suggested that first degree courses are increasingly replacing HNC and HND level courses given the demand for increased theoretical content in the training. If this is the case, the employment patterns of first degree graduates should, in part, increasingly be expected to resemble those for HNC and HND graduates.

6.1.2 Appropriateness of training received

Overall, the quality and appropriateness of the training received was rated highly. However, it seems in part that, due to the changing nature of conservation employment, the following general (or key) skills were rated as being poorly developed by the courses:

- numeracy
- general IT and computer literacy
- marketing and presentations
- self-presentation.

In terms of skills where there was a significant gap between their importance in conservation employment, and in the training provided, a wider range of skills were highlighted. These were:

- time management and project management
- verbal and written communication, and self presentation

- innovation and creativity, and teamwork
- motivation and enthusiasm, and problem solving.

In terms of practical conservation specific skills, the following were rated as being poorly developed by the courses:

- estimation of resources as part of identification and proposal of conservation options, and
- on-site implementation of routine interventive options.

As with the poorly developed general skills, these also appear to be related to the changing nature of conservation employment. The courses are teaching approaches and skills that were appropriate in an earlier, better funded, environment. A case can be made for continuing to teach these skills in the hope of more funding. However, since the skills now in demand are also those in demand from the private sector, a case can be made for changing the courses in line with these new realities. In many ways, the courses are still aiming at training people for the museums and galleries sector, while the private sector, with its different priorities, is an increasingly important employer of conservation graduates.

6.1.3 Changing nature of conservation employment

As already alluded to above, the nature of conservation employment has been changing, and this has imposed changing skills demands on conservation graduates. Increasingly conservation work, including initial assessments, is being contracted out. This has led to a freezing of many conservation posts within the museum, galleries and heritage sectors. At the same time, it has led to an increase in the amount of work being undertaken by the private sector. These changes are having a profound impact on the skills required of conservation graduates. Estimation of the costs of a conservation project is becoming more important. Accounting, budgeting and other skills useful to self-employment such as self-presentation are becoming more important, and are also of value with the public sector.

6.1.4 Commitment to conservation employment

Despite all these changes in the employment market for conservation graduates, there is a particularly strong commitment to work in the sector. The majority of graduates were working in the sector, and those who were not were often in related areas or wanted, and hoped, to return to conservation work.

6.1.5 The role of internships

It is clear that internships provide an invaluable assistance to the early careers of conservation graduates. This is both in terms of providing the necessary practical skills and in terms of

establishing the individuals professionally. Given the number of frozen posts in the museums sector both of these are increasingly difficult to acquire. The more widespread availability of internships can therefore only be beneficial to the increasing professionalism of the sector.

There appears to be a wide variation in the amounts paid to interns and their terms and conditions. Some interns, especially the unpaid ones, appear to be little more than another pair of hands. However, others receive a vital professional training and the assistance to get themselves established. In the sense that access to internships are extremely competitive, MGC's internships, along with the others available, represent a mechanism for rewarding the best and developing a professional cadre at the top of the sector.

6.1.6 Internships and professionalism: the UK model

New accreditation procedures are currently under consideration by the Joint Accreditation Group (JAG), part of the wider National Council for Conservation-Restoration (formerly known as the Conservation Forum). The proposed new joint accreditation procedures are similar to those used by the UKIC, but involve a wider set of standards that have to be met.

Importantly, using the UKIC accreditation model and the proposed JAG model, it is not necessary to have completed a university level qualification to become accredited. However, having completed a university course and subsequently practised as a conservator, it should be easier to be accredited than without the qualification.

6.1.7 Internships and professionalism: the European model

The European Confederation of Conservator-Restorers' Organisation (ECCO) has a set of professional guidelines which state:

> *'To maintain the standards of the profession, the Conservator-Restorer's professional education and training shall be of a university degree or equivalent.' (ECCO 1993)*

This means that if the sub-degree qualifications become degree level qualifications all the conservation graduates in the UK meet that aspect of ECCO's criteria. The list of competencies in the ECCO document indicates that a professional conservator-restorer should be able to:

- develop conservation-restoration programmes and surveys
- provide advice and technical assistance for conservation-restoration of cultural property
- prepare technical reports on cultural property, excluding any judgement of their market value

- conduct research relating to conservation-restoration
- develop educational programmes to teach conservation-restoration
- disseminate information gained from examination, treatment or research
- promote a deeper understanding of conservation-restoration.

It is important to note that there is no requirement for an internship, or other ways of obtaining post-qualification practical experience in this European definition. This is in line with the practice of many disciplines at an European level, where the longer period of study associated with university level qualifications automatically translates into a professional status.

6.2 Recommendations for conservation courses

6.2.1 Nature of training provided

Overall, the training provided matches the requirements of subsequent employment in the conservation area. However, the training provided should take greater account of the current realities facing the conservation sector. This means giving greater importance to the skills needed for self-employment and assessing projects on the basis of cost. The nature of the careers advice offered needs to be improved, and the option of self-employment needs to be given greater prominence.

The postgraduate courses are more successful at training individuals that can, and do, obtain work in the museums and galleries sector. However, there is limited scope for work experience as part of a standard length taught masters qualification. Durham manages to use a model closest to the US model with an assessed long period of work experience as part of their masters course. This is achieved partially by charging part-time fees for the second year. It is unlikely that this model can be generalised.

Some conservation courses are based in arts cost-centres and attract a lower level of HEFCE support than similar courses based in laboratory based cost-centres. Given the pressures to increase the science and theoretical underpinning of conservation courses, recognition needs to be taken of this in terms of higher education funding.

6.2.2 Training and support for self-employment

The courses and the MGC need to take on board the increasing proportions of self-employed conservators. Efforts should be made to ensure that the training offered at least indicates the main problems associated with self-employment and the best sources of advice and support. Material could also be developed

on self-employment, possibly in association with the Prince's Business Trust which has great experience in this area.

6.2.3 Work experience as part of courses

Where possible, courses should include periods of work experience placements. This will in turn require the museums, galleries and private conservation studios that employ conservators to be willing to provide these placements. As well as encouraging paid post-qualifying internships the MGC should also be encouraging bodies (especially those in the private sector) to provide short placements.

6.2.4 Independent careers advice

A possible role for the MGC (or its successor bodies) could be the provision of independent careers advice. This possibility was raised by some of the survey respondents, given the neutral position of the MGC. Some people thought that the courses were under too much pressure to fill course places to offer such independent advice. University careers services seem to be particularly poor at providing advice to conservation graduates, although this is common in disciplines with high levels of self-employment.

6.2.5 HEFCE funding

Approaches should be made to the higher education funding bodies (including HEFCE) to ensure that the funding offered to conservation courses matches their increasingly scientific and laboratory based nature.

6.3 Recommendations on the role of internships

Internships clearly allow a fast track route for conservation graduates to a professional status. Those that have had internships not only have had an opportunity to apply their theoretical training acquired on their courses in a supervised 'real-life' environment, they have gained a number of other benefits. Interns gain access to a network of conservators which can provide access to employment and contracts for the self-employed. In part they acquire the imprimatur of the institution, the collection and their supervisor as well as potential references. They also get more time to develop their portfolio, which is essential for obtaining subsequent conservation employment. More generally, internships offer a mechanism whereby the often tacit knowledge of practising conservators can be passed on to the newly qualified cohorts. Similarly, by exposing practising conservators to the new ideas and procedures coming out of academia, internships provide a mechanism for disseminating latest practice.

At a time when many posts are frozen and more work is being contracted out by museums and galleries, the MGC-supported internships provide a mechanism for support of individuals starting their career, and a method for generating the next generation of trained conservators.

6.3.1 The future of MGC internships

Given the importance of MGC internships both to individual conservators and the museum and galleries sector in general, the provision of these internships should be continued. In practice the conservation internships could be generalised to other disciplines within the museums and galleries sector where similar problems and requirements exist.

6.3.2 Internships and competencies

There was widespread support for the idea that internships should be dependent upon a minimum set of competencies. Emphasis by some was put on the word 'minimum', as it was felt that some institutions would want to seek higher competency levels. There remains the problem of who should assess and certify that these competencies have been achieved. The best solution appears to be based on CHNTO approval of courses, which could be aimed at ensuring that the required competencies are taught and assessed as part of the training.

6.3.3 A code of practice for internships

There needs to be clarity as to what is an internship; the term should be reserved for periods of post-qualifying employment of at least a year. This intentionally excludes any unpaid work experience of shorter periods.

There needs to be a code of practice for internships, especially if they are to become more widespread. This code of practice should include many of the elements of good practice identified in Chapter 5. These include:

- a written timetable agreeing aims objectives and outcomes at the start of the internship
- a common minimum salary
- the possibility of an independent mentor and feedback to the course leaders of the qualifying institution.

6.3.4 Private sector internships

Given the increasing importance of the private sector in terms of the employment of graduate conservators, the possibility of further private sector internships should be investigated. Here

the option of including money to cover the supervision of the intern would help widen participation.

6.4 Recommendations on internships and professional status

In career terms, despite it being easier for someone who has had an internship to become professionally established, it is clearly not a requirement. Therefore, internships should not become mandatory, or derive some special professional status. It was felt that references in the Conservation Register to individuals who have successfully undertaken MGC, or other bodies' internships act as sufficient professional recognition. A separate professional status for those who have successfully completed an internship may not therefore be necessary and could, in practice, become divisive. Those who had undertaken post-qualification work experience were almost as successful in career terms as those who had internships. Equally, many of those without the advantage of an internship become professionally established. To link internships to a professional status, without their more general availability, would be to give even further advantage to those who received them.

6.4.1 Synthesising the UK and European models

The existing UK model of accredited conservator status is derived from a craft skill time-served basis. The European model is derived from an academic time-served basis. It has to be clear that a time-served model does not meet the current requirements for defining a professional conservator. This is regardless as to whether the time served has been in a practical context or within a university classroom. The developing model is based on the ability to practice appropriately on the basis of sound theoretical underpinnings. This developing model synthesises the best elements of both the UK and European model. Internships, by allowing newly qualified graduates to practice their academically acquired skills, could become central to this new model. However, given that there is only likely to be funding for the minority of conservation graduates to undertake internships, an internship should not become a prerequisite for professional acceptance. At the same time a recognised paid, one year internship under a UKIC accredited supervisor, could shorten the period of experience required for accreditation.

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The Questionnaire

THE EARLY CAREERS OF CONSERVATION GRADUATES

Confidential to the Institute for Employment Studies

Please answer the following questions as fully as you are able by ticking the boxes or writing in the spaces provided. Please return the completed questionnaire to IES in the reply-paid envelope provided. If you have any queries, please contact Nick Jagger or Jane Aston at IES: telephone 01273 686751 or e-mail nick.jagger@employment-studies.co.uk. Thank you for your co-operation.

Why did you undertake your most recent conservation course?

1. How important were the following in your choice of your most recent conservation course?
(Please tick one box in each row)

	Not important at all	Not very important	Neither important nor unimportant	Important	Extremely important	Don't know/ not applicable
Interest in the subject matter	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
An opportunity for a change of career direction	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Advancement in chosen career	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
It was a formal entry requirement for a specific career/profession	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
To build practical skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
To complement existing qualifications	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Another reason	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

(Please specify) .....

General skills development

2a. How important have the following skills been to you in your career since you completed your conservation related course? *Please indicate in the **first block** by circling the appropriate point in the range 'very unimportant' to 'very important'.*

2b. To what extent did your time at university/college studying your conservation course help you develop the following skills? *Please indicate in the **second block** by circling the appropriate point in the range 'no help' to 'of great help'.*

	Very unimportant	Very important	No help in developing skill	Of great help in developing skill
Time management	———	———	———	———
Project management	———	———	———	———
General IT/computer literacy	———	———	———	———
Verbal communications	———	———	———	———
Written communications	———	———	———	———
Marketing/presentation	———	———	———	———
Self presentation	———	———	———	———
Innovation and creativity	———	———	———	———
Team working	———	———	———	———
Leadership	———	———	———	———
Motivation and enthusiasm	———	———	———	———
Numeracy	———	———	———	———
Managing own learning and development	———	———	———	———
Problem solving	———	———	———	———

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About the practical training you received

3a. How important have the following technical skills been since you completed your conservation related course?
*Please indicate in the **first block** by circling the appropriate point in the range 'very unimportant' to 'very unimportant'.*

3b. To what extent did your time studying your conservation course help you develop the following skills?
*Please indicate in the **second block** by circling the appropriate point in the range 'no help' to 'ot great help'.*

	Very unimportant	Very important	No help in developing skill	Great help in developing skill
Assessment/examination of artefacts:				
single items or small groups				
collection surveys/plans				
advanced examination techniques				
Identification/proposal of conservation options:				
prediction of outcome				
estimation of resources				
development of new options				
Implementation of routine interventive options:				
minor/moderate interventions				
major interventions to stabilise				
major interventions for study/display				
on-site				
for the **range** of artefacts/materials normally associated with your area				
Application of preventive conservation:				
appropriate handling				
appropriate packaging				
monitoring environment				
maintaining environment				
Documentation of artefacts/ conservation				
Health & Safety in conservation				

Your satisfaction with the course

4. To what extent do you disagree or agree with the following statements about your most recent conservation related course? *(Please circle one point on each line)*

	Disagree entirely	Agree strongly
The course was good value for money		
The course content was too theoretical		
The quality of the teaching was high		
The course content was too practical		
The course content was relevant to a career in conservation		
There were too many people on the course		
The course content matched the prospectus description		
The tutors offered helpful careers advice		
The institution offered helpful careers advice		
The tutors provided useful careers contacts		
The prospectus gave a false impression of career possibilities		
The course was too long		
The course was too short		

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5. Did you participate in any work experience as part of your conservation related course or take up an internship? Here we are using the term 'work-placement' to refer to experience obtained during and as part of a conservation course and the term 'internships' to refer to initial experience obtained after graduation. *(Please tick **all** that apply)*

Yes, I undertook some work experience, organised as part of the course	☐ *Please answer Q6a to 6f*
Yes, I worked as an intern	☐ *Please answer Q7a to 7f*
I had some work experience but it was not an official part of the course	☐ *Please answer Q6a to 6f*
No, I had neither work experience while I was studying, nor an internship	☐ *Go to Q10*

Other *(Please specify)* .....

6a. If you have work experience, who arranged it? Please give us their position/relationship to you. *(Please write in)*

.....

6b. How long did the work experience last? *(Please write in)* ☐ weeks

In the next four questions, please circle the point which best represents your opinion about aspects of the work experience.

		About right	
6c. Was the work experience . .	. . too short		. . too long?
6d. Was the work in the placement . .	. . too difficult		. . too easy?
6e. Was the work on offer . .	. . too general		. . too specific?
6f. Did the work experience . .	. . complement		. . contradict the course?

6g. Was the work experience assessed as part of you course work? *(Please tick one box)*

Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know ☐

7a. If you took up an internship, who arranged it? Please give us their position/relationship to you. *(Please write in)*

.....

7b. How long did the internship last? *(Please write in)* ☐ weeks

In the next four questions, please circle the point which best represents your opinion about aspects of the internship.

		About right	
7c. Was the internship . .	. . too short		. . too long?
7d. Was the work in the internship . .	. . too difficult		. . too easy?
7e. Was the work on offer in the internship . . .	too general		. . too specific?
7f. Did the internship . .	. . complement		. . contradict the course?

7g. Was the internship paid or unpaid? *(Please tick one box)*

Paid ☐ Unpaid ☐

8. Who were the work experience and/or internships with? For each placement, please give the name of the organisation, and a brief description of the type of work the organisation does. *(Please write in)*

.....

.....

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9. Other than you internship/work experience, did you have any other practical training in the field?

Yes ☐ *Go to Q10* No ☐ *Go to Q11*

10. What sort of training did you have?
(Please write in, in as much detail as you can. Feel free to continue on a separate sheet)

.....

.....

.....

Seeking and finding work

11. Did you receive any advice on the employment prospects in conservation and related fields?
*(Please tick **all** boxes that apply.)*

Yes, before I began the conservation related course ☐

Yes, while I was taking the conservation related course ☐

Yes, once I had finished the conservation related course ☐

No ☐ *Go to Q13*

12. Who offered you advice or information? *(Please list)*

.....

13. After finishing, how long did it take you find work which enabled you to use the skills and knowledge you gained on your conservation related course? *(Please give one answer which best describes your experience)*

I was working in a conservation related field throughout the course ☐

I already had work arranged before I finished the course ☐

Finding conservation related work took approximately ☐ weeks *(Please write in the number)*

I have not found work in conservation yet ☐

I have not looked for work in conservation ☐

Other *(Please specify)* .....

14. Since completing your conservation related course, have you ever considered a career in a non-conservation occupation? (*ie* changing jobs) *(Please tick the one answer which best describes your experience)*

I wouldn't say my career in conservation had ever got started ☐ *Go to Q18*

Yes, I thought about it, but did nothing more ☐ *Go to Q16*

Yes, I made enquiries, sought advice, *etc.* but took it no further ☐ *Go to Q16*

Yes, I applied for non-conservation work but did not take it up ☐ *(Go to Q16*

Yes, I took non-conservation work ☐ *Go to Q15*

No, I've never considered a non-conservation career ☐ *Go to Q18*

15. Do you expect to return to conservation related work? Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't ☐

16. What type of work did you switch to, or consider switching to? *(Please write in)*

.....

.....

.....

17. When you were considering non-conservation related occupations, how important were the following factors? *(Please tick one box in each row)*

	Not important at all	Not very important	Neither important nor unimportant	Important	Extremely important	Don't know/ not applicable
It was difficult to get conservation related work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I found conservation related work unchallenging	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Career prospects in conservation were limited	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I was dissatisfied with my income in conservation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The terms/conditions of employment were unsatisfactory	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The available conservation related work was unattractive	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Another reason	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

(Please specify) .....

About your current or most recent work

We are interested in your most current job or work activity. **If you are not currently working, please answer in respect of your most recent work.**

18. What sort of organisation do you work for? *(Please tick the box for the description which best describes the organisation)*

A national not-for-profit organisation (including government related orgs)	☐	A local authority/local authority business or unit	☐
A local not-for-profit organisation	☐	A university, college or other educational establishment	☐
A business	☐	Self employed/own business/sub-contracting	☐

Other *(Please specify)* .....

19. What is your specialisation? *(Please write in)*

.....

Please tick one box for each of the following seven questions

20.	Are these answers in respect of work you are doing now, or your most recent work?	Current work ☐	Last work ☐
21.	Are you working full-time or part-time? (where full-time means 30 or more hours per week)	Full-time ☐	Part-time ☐
22.	Are you working as an unpaid volunteer, or for pay?	Volunteer ☐	Paid ☐
23.	Do you have a permanent contract of employment?	Yes ☐	No ☐
24.	Are you working in the conservation/heritage industry?	Yes ☐	No ☐
25.	Do you have a hands-on conservation job?	Yes ☐	No ☐
26.	Is this your only career related activity, or is it part of a portfolio of activities?	Sole activity ☐	Part of a portfolio ☐

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Career development

27. What was your main activity at each of the following points in time? *(Please tick one box in each row)*

	Working as an employee	Working in some other context*	Further study	Not available for employment	Unemployed
What are you doing now?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
What were you doing					
September 1998	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
April 1998	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
September 1997	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
April 1997	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
September 1996	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
April 1996	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
September 1995	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
April 1995	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

* *ie* as a volunteer, subcontractor, *etc.*

Time line

28. We are interested in how you have planned your career so far, and what route you have chosen to get to your current point. What have been the most important activities in your career plans to date? Could you include any courses or CPD or voluntary positions you have had. Please indicate by drawing and labelling time lines on the matrix below, as per the examples on the far right.

April 1990
September 1990
April 1991
September 1991
April 1992
September 1992
April 1993
September 1993
April 1994
September 1994
April 1995
September 1995
April 1996
September 1996
April 1997
September 1997
April 1998
September 1998
April 1999

Career satisfaction

29. How satisfied are you with your career to date, in terms of the following? *(Please tick one box in each row)*

	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Don't know/ not applicable
Salary/earnings	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Level of responsibility in your work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Pace of career progress	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Level of autonomy/independence	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Making direct use of your conservation course	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Development of skills for future job/career	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Security of employment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Overall career development	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Availability of permanent positions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The need to be self-employed	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

The future

What do you think you will be doing In five and ten years time?

30. Which of the following situations do you think is **most likely** to apply to you? And which would you **like most** to apply to you? *(Please tick **one** box in each of the columns below)*

	In five years time		In tens years time	
	Most likely	Like most	Most likely	Like most
Working in conservation/heritage doing the same type of work as you do now	☐	☐	☐	☐
Working in conservation/heritage in a more senior capacity	☐	☐	☐	☐
Working in an unrelated industry, doing similar work to your current job	☐	☐	☐	☐
Working in an unrelated industry, doing a completely different job	☐	☐	☐	☐
Taking a career break	☐	☐	☐	☐
Undertaking additional full time conservation training	☐	☐	☐	☐
Training for a different job	☐	☐	☐	☐
Doing something else *(Please specify)*				

.....

Background information

This information will be used to put the rest of the answers in this questionnaire in context. The answers given in this section will only be imparted to the Museums and Galleries Commission in the most aggregate form. Personal information will not be released to any other people or organisations. Individuals will not be identified or identifiable.

31. What is the full subject title of the conservation related course you took? *(Please write in)*

.....

32. What was your specialisation? *(Please write in)*

.....

33. What level was the course? (eg Masters, first degree, post graduate diploma) *(Please write in)*

.....

34. At what university, college etc. did you study your conservation related course? *(Please write in)*

.....

35. In what year did you complete the conservation related course? *(Please write in)* .....

36. Are you: Male? ☐ Female? ☐

37. How old were you on your last birthday? *(Please write in)* ☐ years old

38. Before you took the conservation related course, what was the subject and level of your highest qualification?

(Please write in) .....

39. We will be conducting some short interviews with selected respondents. If you are willing to be contacted and interviewed please could you give us you telephone number? *(Please write in)*

.....

Other comments

40. How well did your conservation course, tutors, internship and other university/college staff help you to make the t transition from new graduate to professional conservator?
(Please write in, giving as much detail as possible. Feel free to continue on a separate sheet)

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

41. How could your early professional development been improved? Who could have helped, when and how?
(Please write in, giving as much detail as possible. Feel free to continue on a separate sheet)

.....

.....

.....

.....

Thank you for participating in this study.
Please return your completed questionnaire in the reply-paid envelope to:
Institute for Employment Studies, FREEPOST, Mantell Building, University of Sussex
Falmer, Brighton. BN1 9BR.
Tel: 01273 686751

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Nurturing Conservators: the Early Career Paths of Conservation Graduates

N Jagger, J Aston

The increasing levels of self employment amongst conservators is changing the skills and attributes required for professional development. Internships provided an important head-start for conservators' careers, with the acquisition of valuable hands-on experience as well as a range of useful contacts and the imprimatur of the host institution. Despite relatively low wages and great career uncertainty there is a striking commitment amongst these graduates to conserving the nation's heritage. This report presents the results of a comprehensive study undertaken for the Museums & Galleries Commission.

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